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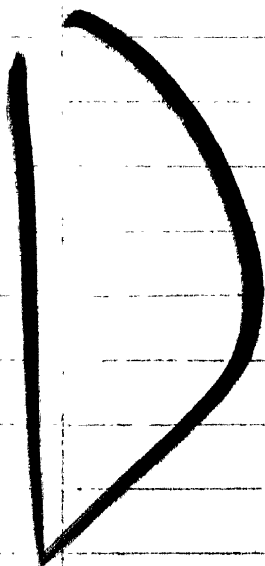
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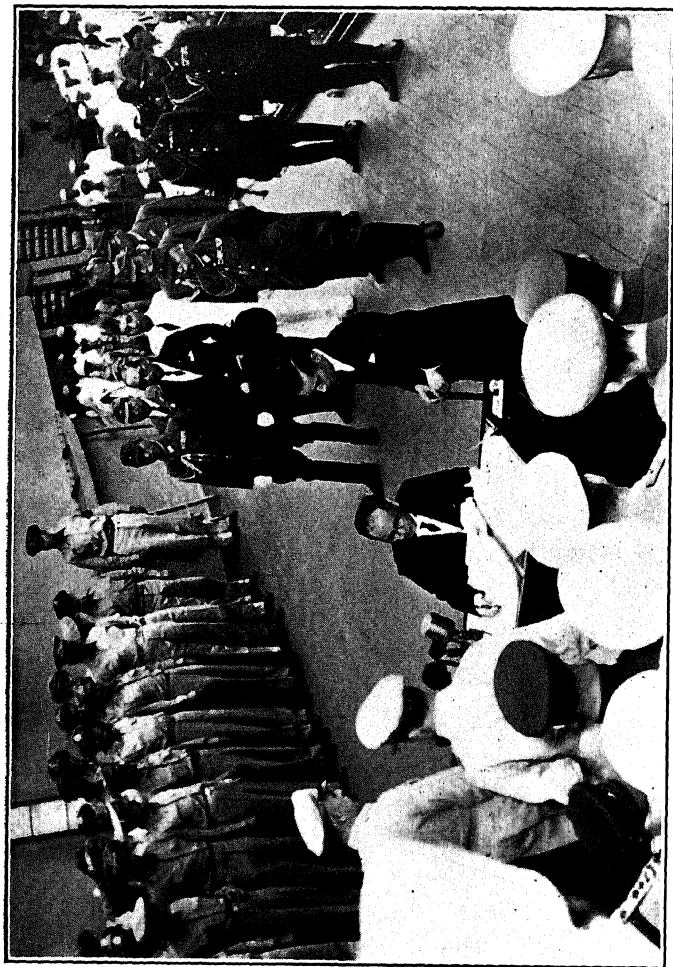
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Here is a Japanese diplomat's story of how his country made war and peace—the story of the events leading to the day in 1945 when the author and ten other members of the Japanese delegation assembled on the decks of the U.S.S. *Missouri* to sign the documents of Japan's surrender.

As an adviser to the highest ranking officials and as the American expert in the Japanese Foreign Office, Mr. Kase participated in many historic events which determined Japan's history during those fateful years, from the signing of the Russo-Japanese neutrality pact to the drafting of the Japanese request for an end to hostilities. He was a close friend of Prince Konoye's and of many other members of the cabinet; he served in Japanese embassies in Washington, London, and Berlin; and he was one of the Japanese who opposed the war and those bent on war well before Pearl Harbor. He was also in the forefront of a small but important group of Japanese who saw the war was lost eighteen months before it ended and who bent all their energies to bring about a surrender.

Toshikazu Kase studied at Amherst and Harvard, was a member of the Japanese Foreign Office from 1925 to the surrender. David N. Rowe, Professor of Political Science at Yale, has edited Mr. Kase's account, providing additional information on events described and conclusions reached.



SHIGEMITSU SIGNING, THE AUTHOR STANDING BY.
September 2, 1945, on board the U.S.S. *Missouri*.

JOURNEY TO THE *Missouri*

BY

TOSHIKAZU KASE

Former Member of the Japanese Foreign Office

EDITED WITH A FOREWORD BY

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TO

Joseph C. Grew

In appreciation of our old friendship

Editor's Foreword

THIS VOLUME was written by its Japanese author in the English language and primarily for the American public. It is mainly concerned with the background of the Pacific war, the chief causes of Japan's entry into that war and of her defeat, and the efforts of responsible Japanese, beginning as early as 1944, to bring the war to an end by surrender. To the student of contemporary Japan, however, the book is also important for its disclosure of the author's attitudes as they bear on problems of the present. They come out as he treats his main themes, and they are the attitudes of an American-educated former diplomat who served the Japanese Foreign Office in various responsible capacities around the world over a period of some twenty years. The views held by such an individual on the subjects and persons discussed here assume an especial significance as the sixth year of the occupation begins.

The volume is particularly interesting in view of the fact that few if any of the many Japanese publications appearing since the surrender have been made generally available to the American public. Only one of the reasons for this is, of course, that very few Americans read the Japanese language. Mr. Kase must be given high praise for his courage and initiative in undertaking to write his book in English. One does not need to ask how many American diplomats, past or present, could have written a book in Japanese, or, for that matter, in any other Far Eastern language. The question answers itself.

All this lends particular interest to this Japanese story of the coming of the war, the war itself, and the eventual surrender on the deck of the battleship *Missouri*. Mr. Kase, for example, takes a very strongly pro-American attitude, to which is joined an only less strongly stated pro-British point of view. He fully acknowledges the great debt owed by his people to Gen. Douglas MacArthur, the supreme commander for the Allied powers. He supports the Japanese Emperor, both the institution and the present ruler. One of his chief concerns is to clear the Emperor of any possible responsi-

bility for bringing on the Pacific war. On the other hand, he is equally interested in connecting the Emperor with the decision to surrender, a connection which seems well supported by the evidence. There is apparent in this book, however, the difficulty inherent in attributing power and influence to the Emperor in the latter instance while denying it in the former.

As the editor had occasion to point out in August, 1945, the position of the Emperor was crucial in the minds of the Japanese oligarchy in the days before the surrender, perhaps because the government had previously made every effort to connect the Emperor in the minds of the people with the inception and conduct of the Pacific war.¹ This propaganda line, which at best enjoyed only a partial success, was doubtless aimed at giving the Emperor credit for an eventual victory, as well as mobilizing public support to make that victory possible. At any rate, Mr. Kase performs a valuable service in corroborating previous evidence of the central concern of the governing group in Japan before surrender with the preservation of the position of the Emperor.²

He rightly attributes to many of the senior statesmen of Japan a general desire to preserve or promote peace, either at the time the Pacific war broke out or prior to the Japanese surrender. He also, and correctly, places in the antiwar element many of his associates in the Japanese Foreign Office both before and during the war. In this respect he contrasts the Foreign Office with the military and naval high commands. Most of the members of the latter he accurately describes as inept, shortsighted, or overoptimistic, with particular reference to their advocacy and conduct of aggressive war both before and after Pearl Harbor. At the same time he generally praises both commanding officers and the rank and file of the services for their heroism in combat. He seems slightly less anti-Navy than anti-Army. This is perhaps to be equated with the Japanese Navy's historic fear and apprehension of war with the United States and Great Britain, the great sea powers, an attitude also held by the Foreign Office.

By contrast with his views on the United States and Britain, the

1. See "Ultimatum for Japan," *Far Eastern Survey*, XIV, No. 16 (August 15, 1945), 217-219.

2. Cf. Rowe, David Nelson, "The New Japanese Constitution-I," *Far Eastern Survey*, XVI, No. 2 (January 29, 1947), 13-17.

author seems strongly and outspokenly anti-Russian. He misses few opportunities to place either Communism or its proponents in a bad light. This strongly held point of view is sometimes seen by indirection, as in the case of Germany, which he seems to present in a somewhat more favorable light when she is anti-Russian and less favorably when she is anti-Ally. On Hitler his presentation is generally balanced. It is possible that this results from a tendency to evaluate Germany in the present-day context of cold war rivalries. Of eleven references to Hitler by name, found in the index to this volume, five are neutral, two place Hitler in a "bad" light, three seem to attribute to the Führer a character of "weakness," and only one to credit him with "strength." It would be interesting to analyze other examples of Japanese literature of the occupation period for the same factor. In doing so one would need, of course, to keep in mind that for a number of years Germany and Japan were allies in war, and at the same time to evaluate the Japanese treatment in light of the powerful symbolic significance of the word "Hitler" in the world today.

By contrast, the author always mentions the name of the late President Roosevelt in an entirely favorable light. On the other hand he provides powerful support for the views of those Americans and others who have declared that under President Roosevelt's direction the pre-Pearl Harbor diplomacy of the United States in the Pacific made a Japanese-American war inevitable.

Mr. Kase's book provides valuable evidence on still another important aspect of our recent diplomatic history, that concerned with Russia's entry into the Pacific war. It now becomes even more difficult than before to understand the heavy price paid to Stalin at Yalta to bring the USSR into a war which, as this book shows, was already won by us and lost by the Japanese at the time of the Yalta meeting. The movement in Japan toward surrender had begun as early as 1944 when key personnel of the Japanese government concluded that the war was lost. In view of this fact, and others presented in this book, the diplomacy of Yalta can be explained only as based upon a monumental failure of American political and military intelligence on wartime Japan. It is either that or a serious failure to make use of, and to interpret for policy actions, the information that was available.

The price paid at Yalta was the re-establishment, with our sup-

port, of the early twentieth-century Russian imperialist position on Chinese soil. It is surely one of the most bitter truths of recent history that this involved nothing less than the sacrifice of that traditional American policy toward China, the support of which led us into war with Japan in the first place. Mr. Kase's book does much to convince us that this was unnecessary in view of conditions in Japan in February, 1945. In addition, his discussion of the basic elements in Far Eastern international relations may convince even doubters that this expedient should have been avoided even if the cost had been heavy.

To take a final case, the author's attitude toward China is, perhaps understandably, somewhat unfriendly. General, though mild, denigration is his rule when speaking of that country or of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, China's leader in so many years of anti-Japanese resistance. This is of course natural in view of the belief, held by many Japanese today, that China was the main source of that fatal disagreement with the Western powers, and particularly with the United States, which finally led Japan into the Pacific war and to ultimate defeat at the hands of overwhelmingly more powerful enemies. It is highly probable that in comparable circles in China the reverse attitude would be found to exist, blaming all on Japan, and that it would be expressed with less reserve than in Japan under the occupation. The study of these opinions held on both sides, in light of the real and material factors making for rapprochement of the two countries today, is of the greatest importance in international politics. Mr. Kase is himself thoroughly aware of the need for radical improvement in Sino-Japanese relations.

To these and other views of the author of this volume it would doubtless be unwise to attribute universality in present-day Japan. They are presented here, for the American audience, merely as the views of one individual. They are worthy of attention as such, and particularly in light of the author's history of friendliness to the United States and his participation in recent important events of Japanese history. It is to be hoped that many more documents of this kind will become available to American readers in the near future.

The editor wishes to acknowledge with thanks the assistance of all those who have helped in this project. He is particularly appre-

ciative of the efforts of his research assistant, Mr. Russell L. Wehner, Jr., of the class of 1952 in Yale College. Mr. Wehner helped with the checking of the numerous points of fact in the volume and also made the index. Responsibility for errors in the editing must, however, fall solely upon the editor.

It is a pleasure also to acknowledge the material assistance given by the administration and staff members of the Sterling Memorial Library of Yale University, both for advice and for working facilities provided in the library. To the staff of the Yale University Press there is due an award of thanks for their help in the work of editing this manuscript.

DAVID NELSON ROWE

New Haven, Conn.

June 15, 1950

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Author's Preface

THIS BOOK tells of the critical period leading up to the surrender of Japan in September, 1945. It is largely based upon first-hand experience of that stirring drama which was both painful and poignant. A proud nation stood at the crossroads of life and death. By accepting defeat for the first time in her long history she chose to live. It was only after a prolonged struggle between the contending forces that this choice was finally made. The issue was an intensely grave one, involving as it did a possible loss of men and material beyond the power of arithmetic to compute. In fact the capitulation of Japan saved the lives of several million men. How, then, was Japan brought to her knees to sue for peace?

I have tried to set down the facts as I know them in the way of a dispassionate historian, but in unguarded moments my emotion, all the stronger for suppression, may, I fear, have betrayed me. History devoid of emotion is no better than a marionette show, since after all it must deal with a human drama chequered with the joys and sorrows of the players who strut and fret their hour upon its stage. History is, I hold, idle letters written upon perishable pages but for the exultations and sufferings of those human creatures who give it life. However, I do not pretend to be a playwright. I am a humble mason whose self-appointed task is to erect a modest cenotaph to the vanished empire whose glory and grandeur are now forever consigned to the realm of memory.

The lines of Rossetti,

“War that shatters her slain
And peace that grinds them as grain,”

have never been more true than today. We have learned anew, victors and vanquished alike, that the sword and slaughter do not solve the woes and wants of mankind. For even as victory crowns the victor so shall it crucify him. Still more so in the atomic age. We Japanese who have drained to the dregs the bitterness of de-

feat should naturally be the first to redeem the world's lost sanity. Now we have taken the resolve to renounce the cult of the sword and to embrace the creed of peace. We desire to atone for our past sins by hewing stones for the service of humanity—to build a city of light on the hill, a light unto the world.

Under the guidance of General MacArthur the occupation has attained a brilliant success. Thanks to him Japan is no longer a desperate traveler lost in deep forests between two twilights. At last an era of hope has dawned for her. Slowly but surely a new Japan is emerging. The light that illumines her path is the same light that guides the footsteps of mankind in its march toward the goal of an enduring peace. Let all the nations, great and small, unite in the harmony of the simple prayer for a warless world. Let there be no more wars to end war. Let Japan's surrender be the end of the last war on this earth.

The first chapter records my personal impression of the ceremony of surrender on board the U.S.S. *Missouri*. If the style is somewhat emotional, it is because I could not help being emotional.

The second chapter will, I hope, serve as an introduction to the narrative which follows. I try in it to describe briefly the contest between the forces for war and those for peace. This is a sort of prologue to the drama.

The main story is unfolded in the rest of the book.

A Date with Destiny

AS HE SIGNED his name he paused for a moment looking inquiringly up at me. I consulted my wrist watch: four minutes past nine. Deliberately he put the time down, 0904, after his name, Mamoru Shigemitsu, written in Japanese in a masterful hand. It was on board the United States battleship *Missouri*. The instrument of formal surrender had just been signed by the principal Japanese delegate.

At 9:04 A.M. September 2, 1945, the hostilities between Japan and the Allied powers officially came to an end.

Long desired and long delayed, peace had returned at last to the shattered world. Guns ceased roaring, soldiers halted in midmarch, the stupendous struggle was over. With the capitulation of Japan the global war was finally brought to its dramatic close.

What I witnessed there as one of the members of the Japanese delegation will live long in my memory. It will, I believe, remain one of the most memorable dates in world history, hardly to be surpassed in importance by any other. It is a landmark on the highroad to freedom and progress because it marks the rebirth of a nation redeemed from the bondage of misgovernment through a paralyzing defeat.

For more than a decade the Japanese people were forced to live a sequestered life ignorant of trend and tendency in the world outside, yoked to the power of darkness under the uncontested domination of the military clique. Then they were rudely awakened from the torpor of years to hard realities. Since her entrance into the community of nations some ninety years ago Japan has always been a hungry guest. Poor in resources, her narrow archipelago could not support her teeming millions, frugal though they were and industrious. She felt, therefore, that she was confronted with the alternatives: expand or explode. And she ex-

panded. Her rapid rise, which was truly phenomenal, she owed to costly victories in two wars, one over China, sleeping giant of the day, in 1895, the other over Russia, of famed imperial might, in 1905. These naturally paved the way for the gradual ascendance of the military. When the world-wide depression set in, in 1930 Japan found herself in sore straits, denied access to overseas markets and materials as other countries, eager to save their own economies, did not scruple to close their doors in the face of the hungry guest, now hungrier than ever. The swelling tide of unrest in Europe which attended Hitler's advent to power, itself a violent reaction to economic hardships, coincided with and contributed toward the rise of the Japanese militarists who asserted their energetic leadership in quest of a place in the sun. Embarking upon their far-reaching design, they recklessly set fire to the tinderbox, first seizing Manchuria and then invading China, and inadvertently kindled a universal conflagration. The younger officers were, at the same time, bent upon reforming the national structure politically and economically. They molded national thought into a martial cast, and in order to facilitate their program of domestic revolution, followed a course designed "to busy giddy minds with foreign quarrels." Giddy minds theirs were, indeed, for the gullible, unthinking mass meekly accepted the lead of the jingoists who advocated an expansionist policy in open challenge to the Western powers. There ensued an alliance with the Axis powers which inevitably complicated the already strained relations with the United States and Great Britain. A false oracle, it would seem, prophesied easy conquest for the brainless warriors, and they plunged the nation into a catastrophic war. Like a bubble the empire expanded and, expanding, exploded.

Certainly, however, nothing was further removed from the thought of the common people than to wage a war upon the great democracies. They were like the proverbial stray sheep who were shepherded to destruction by the cunning of a wolf in sheep's clothing; dupes of a subtle deception. Hollow expectation thrived on their pampered ignorance. The military made the most of it and imposed their iron grip upon the people who little suspected that they were regarded as ready cannon fodder. Defeat brought disillusionment and salvation. Gone forever are the pride and pagantry of the once formidable army, vanished the glory and

grandeur of the once invincible navy. The edgeless sword drops from the despots' hands. Veil by veil the past evil and errors are unveiled to the mortified people. Scene by scene the bygone sin and shame are disclosed to the remorseful nation. In deep sorrow the humbled country prays on suppliant knees for atonement.

And now in place of the torn banner of the deposed tyrants a new standard is hopefully raised and from the dust of the outworn creed a new faith emerges. Hope replaces fear. Freedom drives away oppression. A nation is again made free.

September 2 thus commemorates the rebirth of a nation prostrate from defeat yet groping for light—light to lead its people back once again to the blessed way of peace. Japan has renounced the path of aggression and aggrandizement in order to plod the arduous road to concord and conciliation. She has exchanged her sword for a spade. With the spade she will cultivate a new land of hope. For by fulfilling the terms of the Potsdam Declaration she aspires to enhance the cause of peace based on the ideals of freedom. She will strive to contribute her share, let it be ever so humble, toward promoting an enduring peace, hoping to regain the respect of other nations which she so foolishly forfeited. But when will the hungry guest, now on the verge of starvation, be admitted to the lighted hall where the family of nations is gathered for a friendly feast? Will it be her fate to remain an outsider? Knocking and still knocking, will she be left an outcast, unheeded and uncared for at the bolted door? Indeed this day, her doomsday, which closes a long account of nothings paid with loss, is at once a day of retribution and resurrection, a date with destiny portentous for the future.

What a hard road for the Allies it was too, this road to victory, paved with unnumbered lives of fallen men. Row upon row of crosses erected to the memory of soldiers on those Pacific islands, "the sprinkled isles, lily on lily, that o'er-lace the sea," are the price America paid for V-J Day. And the heavier the price the greater naturally is the emotion felt by the Americans on this occasion. This applies in divers degrees to the rest of the Allies, the British Empire, China, and several others besides. It was a day of humiliation for us, the vanquished, a day of jubilation for them, the victorious. Ours were tears and tribulation, theirs triumph and tumult.

Blow, trumpets, all your exultations blow! Boom, cannons, all

your jubilations boom! Clash out, merry bells, from every rocking steeple. For the victors celebrate their victory and perhaps are not even conscious that all is not solved.

With Japan eliminated from the arena, there now prevails a sudden vacuum in the Far East, creating vast uncertainties and engendering international unrest. China, legitimate heir to Japan's position, is yet undelivered from the throes of an interminable civil war. The United States, emerging victorious, now exerts her supreme influence over Japan, conquered foe of yesterday and willing friend of tomorrow. This in itself is a situation brought about by the irresistible force of history which unleashed the youthful energy of America on a career of expansion toward the Pacific, where Providence decreed she should exert a predominant influence. A new balance of power will emerge from the prevalent confusion; but whatever its pattern, the destiny of the United States must be inseparably wrought into the tapestry of Asiatic imponderables.

2

It was a surprisingly cool day for early September. The sky was dull gray with clouds hanging low. We left Tokyo at about five o'clock in the morning. There were nine of us, three each from the Foreign Office, and the War and Navy departments, besides the two delegates, Shigemitsu, the foreign minister, representing the government, and General Umezu, chief of staff of the Army, representing the Supreme Command. With the two delegates leading the procession, our cars moved at full speed along the battered and bumpy road to Yokohama. By the highway we could see only miles and miles of debris and destruction where once there had flourished busy towns with numbers of munition factories. The desolation was enough to freeze the heart. But these hollow ruins were perhaps a fit prelude to the drama in which we were about to take part—for were we not sorrowing men come to seek a tomb for a fallen empire? They were also a grim reminder that the nation had been snatched from impending annihilation. For were not these scenes of havoc a sufficient warning? The waste of war and the ignominy of surrender woven together in my mind produced a strange fabric of grief and sorrow. There were few

men on the road and probably none recognized us. Our journey had been kept wholly secret lest extremists attempt to impede us by violence.

To begin with, there was much difficulty in selecting the delegates. Nobody wanted to volunteer for the odious duty. The prime minister, Prince Higashikuni, was considered unsuitable because he was the Emperor's uncle. Next choice fell on Prince Konoye who was vice premier and the real power in the government, but he shunned the ordeal. Finally the mission was assigned to Foreign Minister Shigemitsu.¹ On accepting the imperial command to sign the surrender document as principal delegate, he confided to me what a mark of sovereign's confidence he felt it to be. Shigemitsu who had served twice before as foreign minister, in the latter period of the Tojo cabinet and throughout the succeeding Koiso cabinet, is a man of confirmed peaceful views. During his twelve months' tenure of office he did his utmost to prepare for an early termination of the war. His efforts, in which I assisted him to the best of my ability, were, in fact, powerfully instrumental in expediting the restoration of peace. Thus there was reason to believe that, unlike others who evaded the mission as unbearably onerous, Shigemitsu regarded it as a painful but profitable task. He was determined to make this day of national mortification the starting point for a renewed pilgrimage toward the dim and distant goal of a peaceful state. If this day marked a journey's end, it must also signify a journey's beginning. The traveler to grief must be replaced by the traveler to glory.

Not so with General Umezu² who reluctantly accepted the appointment as the second delegate. As will be explained later, Umezu had opposed surrender up to the last moment. He was a soldier born to command and not to sue. When he was recommended for the mission, so it is reported, he grew white with anger and replied that if it was forced upon him he would instantly

1. Mamoru Shigemitsu was tried as a war criminal after the Allied occupation of Japan, and on November 12, 1948, was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for war guilt. *New York Times* (November 12, 1948), p. 1. On March 7, 1950, it was indicated that he might be granted parole. *Ibid.* (March 8, 1950), p. 16. (Ed.)

2. Gen. Yoshijiro Umezu, former commanding general, First Army, North China, was alleged to be a member of the Black Dragon Society. The United States Strategic Bombing Survey (hereafter referred to as USSBS), *Japan's Struggle to End the War* (U. S. Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 35. He was tried as a war criminal, and sentenced to life imprisonment. *New York Times* (November 12, 1948), p. 1. (Ed.)

commit harakiri. It required the Emperor's personal persuasion to make him execute the duties with a good grace.

It may now sound somewhat overprotective, but as precautions were then deemed necessary the appointment of the two delegates was not made known to the press until the last moment. Though the names of the nine persons who accompanied them had been communicated to and approved by the Allied authorities, they were not published at all, in compliance with the wishes of the military. Such, indeed, was the temper of the times.

The party reached Yokohama in less than an hour. The spearhead of the Eighth Army had landed there that day. Sentries with gleaming bayonets were guarding the streets through which we rode slowly to the port area. The flags were removed from the hoods of our cars and the officers left their swords at the office of the prefectural governor where we rested a while. We had thus furled the banner and ungirt the sword. Diplomats without flag and soldiers without sword, morose and silent we continued the journey to the quay.

There were four destroyers with white placards hung on their masts, A, B, C, D. We boarded B, the *Lansdown*, a ship which had seen meritorious service in the battle of the Pacific. As the destroyer pushed out of the harbor we saw in the offing line on line of gray warships, both heavy and light, anchored in a majestic array. This was the mighty pageant of the Allied navies that so lately went forth into battle, now holding back their swift thunder and floating like calm seabirds on the waters. A spirit of festivity pervaded the atmosphere.

After about an hour's cruise the destroyer stopped in full view of the battleship *Missouri* which lay anchored some eighteen miles off shore. The huge 45,000-ton vessel towered above the rest of the proud squadron. High on the mast the Stars and Stripes fluttered in the wind. This was the very flag that had been hoisted on the White House on the day of Pearl Harbor. It had been unfurled in Casablanca, Rome, and Berlin, celebrating each time the victorious entry of the American forces. As we approached the battleship in a motor launch our eyes were caught by rows of sailors lining the rails, a shining multitude in their uniforms of immaculate white.

3

We climbed the gangway, Shigemitsu leading the way, limping heavily with his cane. He walks on a wooden leg, having had his left leg blown off in a bomb outrage in Shanghai some fifteen years ago. It was as if he took each step with a groan and the rest of us echoed it with a sigh. As the eleven of us climbed onto the quarter-deck on the starboard side we formed in three short rows facing the representatives of the Allied powers across a table covered with green cloth on which were placed the white documents of surrender. The quarter-deck was lively with color, red, gold, brown, and olive, the decorations and ribbons on the variegated uniforms of the Allied representatives. There were also row upon row of American admirals and generals in somber khaki. But what added to the animation of the scene was the war correspondents who, monkeylike, clung precariously to every point of vantage. Evidently scaffolding had been erected for the convenience of the cameramen who were working frantically at their job. The gallery of spectators seemed numberless, crowding every inch of available space on the giant ship: on the mast, the smokestacks, the gun turrets—on everything and everywhere.

As we appeared on the scene, we were, I felt, being subjected to the torture of the pillory. A million eyes seemed to beat on us with the million shafts of a rattling storm of arrows barbed with fire. I felt them sink into my body with a sharp physical pain. Never had I realized that staring eyes could hurt so much.

We waited a few minutes, standing in the public gaze like penitent boys awaiting the dreaded schoolmaster. I tried to preserve the dignity of defeat but it was difficult and every minute seemed to contain ages. I looked up and saw painted on the wall nearby several miniature Rising Suns, our flag, evidently corresponding to the planes and submarines shot down or sunk by the gun crews of the battleship. As I tried to count these marks a lump rose in my throat and tears quickly gathered in my eyes, flooding them. I could hardly bear the sight. Heroes of unwritten stories, these were young boys who defied death gaily and gallantly, manning the daily thinning ranks of the suicide corps. They were like cherry blossoms, emblems of our national character, swiftly bloom-

ing into riotous beauty and falling just as quickly. What do they see today, looking down on the scene of our surrender?

My thought was interrupted by General MacArthur, supreme commander for the Allied powers, who walked briskly from the interior of the ship and stepped to the microphones placed by the table. As he began to deliver the opening address, I felt considerably surprised; it was our understanding that there would be no speech. I was all ears not to miss a word. Rare union of soldier and statesman, the general stood firmly erect above the others. Fully utilizing the qualities of his sonorous voice, he began:

We are gathered here, representative of the major warring powers, to conclude a solemn agreement whereby peace may be restored. The issues, involving divergent ideals and ideologies, have been determined on the battlefields of the world and hence are not for our discussion or debate. Nor is it for us here to meet, representing as we do a majority of the peoples of the earth, in a spirit of distrust, malice or hatred.

Each syllable of his words made an indelible impression upon my mind. It was a speech fit to adorn a great occasion when mankind stood in the presence of history. Listening intently, I gazed as everybody did at the speaker and saw the white paper in his hands tremble in the wind. That enhanced the sense of drama, emotion now visibly overflowing the rapt audience.

The address continued, interspersed only by the busy clicks of the newsmen's cameras.

But rather it is for us, both victors and vanquished, to rise to that higher dignity which alone benefits the sacred purposes we are about to serve, committing all our people unreservedly to faithful compliance with the understanding they are here formally to assume.

It is my earnest hope and indeed the hope of all mankind that from this solemn occasion a better world shall emerge out of the blood and carnage of the past—a world founded upon faith and understanding—a world dedicated to the dignity of man and the fulfillment of his most cherished wish—for freedom, tolerance and justice.

The terms and conditions upon which the surrender of the Japanese Imperial Forces is here to be given and accepted are contained in the instrument of surrender now before you.

As Supreme Commander for the Allied powers, I announce it my firm purpose, in the tradition of the countries I represent, to proceed

in the discharge of my responsibilities with justice and tolerance, while taking all necessary dispositions to insure that the terms of surrender are fully, promptly and faithfully complied with.

What stirring eloquence and what a noble vision! Here is the victor announcing the verdict to the prostrate enemy. He can exact his pound of flesh if he so chooses. He can impose a humiliating penalty if he so desires. And yet he pleads for freedom, tolerance, and justice. For me, who expected the worst humiliation, this was a complete surprise. I was thrilled beyond words, spellbound, thunderstruck. For the living heroes and dead martyrs of the war this speech was a wreath of undying flowers.

Perhaps not since I listened to Briand on the rostrum of the League of Nations years ago have I heard such eloquence. This narrow quarter-deck was now transformed into an altar of peace far higher than the proud platform once erected at Geneva. As MacArthur's words sailed on wings over wind and wave to the far corners of the globe, nations gathered to offer profound gratitude to the Lord of all being, throned afar, for the return of peace, earnestly praying for its preservation.

In a few minutes' time the speech was over and the supreme commander, with a stern gesture, invited the Japanese delegates to sign the instrument of surrender. Shigemitsu signed first, followed by Umezu. It was eight minutes past nine when MacArthur put his signature to the documents. Other representatives of the Allied powers followed suit, the United States, China, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, Australia, Canada, France, the Netherlands, and New Zealand, in that order. As I saw them step up to the table one after another I could not help wondering anew how it was that Japan, a poor country, had had the temerity to wage war against the combination of so many powerful nations. Indeed, it was Japan against the whole world. We had fought valiantly with the rage and fury of Satan storming the iron walls of Heaven, setting our gallant army against the armies of an immeasurable host of adversaries, commanding, as they did, the resources of the world. The contest was unequal from the first. The adventure was a product of brains fired by sheer madness. Like Satan's doomed legions, we fell from Heaven through chaos headlong into Hell.

We might have stood firm, yet we fell. On this day of judgment as we came pleading guilty to the bar, we must, I told myself, steep ourselves in immutable determination to regain the lost Paradise.

When the Soviet delegates advanced, with gold epaulettes and red-striped trousers, I felt some sense of irony in recalling the circumstances in which our government solicited the good offices of the Soviet Union in arranging peace with the United States and Great Britain. But far keener was my regret as I watched the Chinese representative affix his signature to our surrender. It was a piece of deep malice on the part of fortune that even to this day China and Japan, two sister nations who should be trusted friends, should stand face to face as victor and vanquished. And today, while defeated Japan strides forward on the road to democracy, victorious China still remains a house divided against itself, repeating her chronic civil disturbances. The termination of war only served to accentuate China's internal feud which has been aggravated by the armed struggles between the Kuomintang and the Communists. Unless Japan and China see eye to eye, embracing each other in truly sisterly affection, the future of Asia is bound to be gloomy, which in turn will adversely affect the general stabilizing of the world.

When all the representatives had finished signing, MacArthur stepped forward and announced slowly: "Let us pray that peace be now restored to the world and that God will preserve it always." He then faced our delegation and said curtly, "These proceedings are closed." We withdrew, filing out in the order of our arrival.

At that moment the skies parted and the sun shone brightly through the layers of clouds. A steady drone above now became a deafening roar and an armada of airplanes paraded into sight, sweeping over the warships. Four hundred B-29's and 1,500 carrier planes joined in the aerial pageant in a final salute. The ceremony was over.

4

Sitting in the gun room of the destroyer on the way back to the port, I heard the radio announce the broadcast of the supreme commander to the States:

Today the guns are silent. A great tragedy has ended. A great victory has been won. The skies no longer rain death—the seas bear only commerce—men everywhere walk upright in the sunlight. The entire world lies quietly at peace. The holy mission has been completed and in reporting this to you, the people, I speak for the thousands of silent lips, forever stilled among the jungles and the beaches and in the deep waters of the Pacific which marked the way. I speak for the unnamed brave millions homeward bound to take up the challenge of that future which they did so much to salvage from the brink of disaster.

As I look back on the long, tortuous trail from those grim days of Bataan and Corregidor, when an entire world lived in fear; when democracy was on the defensive everywhere, when modern civilization trembled in the balance, I thank a merciful God that He has given us the faith, the courage and the power from which to mould victory.

We have known the bitterness of defeat and the exultation of triumph, and from both we have learned there can be no turning back. We must go forward to preserve in peace what we won in war.

A new era is upon us. Even the lesson of victory brings with it profound concern, both for our future security and the survival of civilization. The destructiveness of the war potential, through progressive advances in scientific discovery, has in fact now reached a point which revises the traditional concept of war.

Men since the beginning of time have sought peace. Various methods through the ages have attempted to devise an international process to prevent or settle disputes between nations. From the very start workable methods were found in so far as individual citizens were concerned, but the mechanics of an instrumentality of larger international scope have never been successful. Military alliance, balances of power, Leagues of Nations all in turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible of war.

The utter destructiveness of war now blots out this alternative. We have had our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater and more equitable system Armageddon will be at our door. The problem basically is theological and involves a spiritual recrudescence and improvement of human character that will synchronize with our almost matchless advance in science, art, literature and all material and cultural developments of the past two thousand years. It must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh.

We stand in Tokyo today reminiscent of our countryman, Commodore Perry ninety-two years ago. His purpose was to bring to Japan an era of enlightenment and progress by lifting the veil of isolation to the friendship, trade and commerce of the world. But alas the knowl-

edge thereby gained of Western science was forged into an instrument of oppression and human enslavement. Freedom of expression, freedom of action, even freedom of thought were denied through suppression of liberal education, through appeal to superstition and through the application of force.

We are committed by the Potsdam Declaration of principles to see that the Japanese people are liberated from this condition of slavery. It is my purpose to implement this commitment just as rapidly as the armed forces are demobilized and the other essential steps taken to neutralize the war potential. The energy of the Japanese race, if properly directed, will enable expansion vertically rather than horizontally. If the talents of the race are turned into constructive channels, the country can lift itself from its present deplorable state into a position of dignity.

To the Pacific basin has come the vista of a new emancipated world. Today, freedom is on the offensive, democracy is on the march. Today, in Asia as well as in Europe, unshackled peoples are tasting the full sweetness of liberty, the relief from fear.

In the Philippines, America has evolved a modern era for this new free world of Asia. In the Philippines, America has demonstrated that peoples of the east and peoples of the west may walk side by side in mutual respect and with mutual benefit. The history of our sovereignty there has now the full confidence of the East.

And so, my fellow-countrymen, today I report to you that your sons and daughters have served you well and faithfully with the calm, deliberate, determined fighting spirit of the American soldier and sailor based upon a tradition of historical trait, as against the fanaticism of an enemy supported only by mythological fiction, their spiritual strength and power has brought us through to victory. They are homeward bound—take care of them.

MacArthur is a man of peace. Never has the truth of the line “peace hath her victories no less renown’d than war” been more eloquently demonstrated. Is it not rare good fortune, I asked myself, that a man of such caliber and character should have been designated as the supreme commander who will shape the destiny of Japan? Does he not say that “the energy of the Japanese race, if properly directed, will enable expansion vertically rather than horizontally”? Does he not also predict that “If the talents of the race are turned into constructive channels, the country can lift itself from its present deplorable state into a position of dignity”?

We must be grateful for this recognition and in gratitude must pledge our best efforts to vindicate the truth of this prediction.

MacArthur included a timely reference to Commodore Perry's visit to these shores. On the U.S.S. *Missouri* near the deck where the ceremony had just taken place I had seen encased in the white wall a faded flag. It was the old flag that flew from the mast of Perry's flagship *Powhattan* when ninety-two years ago he first knocked at the door of Japan, then a hermit nation. Now it paid a return visit as if to witness the subsequent vicissitudes of the island empire. Japan, awakened by Perry's black ships, rose speedily to the position of a major power, surprising the world by her spectacular achievements. In a brief span of time she became a naval power surpassed only by the United States and Great Britain and enjoyed immense prestige as a recognized leader of the Asiatic nations. Now prostrate in defeat, she greets once again the flag of Commodore Perry. If Perry's spirit is embodied in this flag, does it not call upon us to sweep away the militarism that caused our downfall and urge us to open wide our doors once again to external intercourse—this time to repair and restore our national fortunes by assimilating and acquiring not aggressive militarism but democratic ways? In accepting defeat under this historic flag we must not idly deplore the irretrievable past but rise to our full stature to cope with the manifold difficulties that confront us, in order to resuscitate and rebuild the nation on democratic principles. We beg to be judged not by our past deserts but by what we will deserve in the future. MacArthur's address still vibrant in my ears seemed to exhort our people to join efforts in that work of reconstruction and rehabilitation which must commence at once.

While the destroyer sped home I hurriedly wrote down my impressions of the surrender ceremony. Shigemitsu took this document to the throne immediately after our return to the capital where the Emperor was anxiously waiting. At the end of this report, in which I dwelt at length upon the superb address of the supreme commander, I raised the question whether it would have been possible for us, had we been victorious, to embrace the vanquished with a similar magnanimity. Clearly, it would have been different. Returning from the audience Shigemitsu told me that the Emperor had nodded with a sigh in agreement. Indeed, an

incalculable ideological distance separates America from Japan. After all, we were not beaten on the battlefields by dint of superior arms. We were defeated by a nobler ideal. The real issue was moral—beyond all the powers of algebra to compute.

The day will come when recorded time, age on age, will seem but a point in retrospect. However, happen what may in the future, this day on the *Missouri* will stand out as a bright point in world history, a shining obelisk in the desert of human endeavors that marks a tireless march toward an enduring peace. By that time the Pacific war which cost so much blood and treasure will have become an episode surviving only in songs and stories dedicated to its heroes. Then, perhaps, a historian or two will delve into faded papers to ascertain the facts relating to Japan's capitulation. It is for their benefit that I now undertake to write this narrative which will, I hope, throw some light on the circumstances leading to the termination of hostilities.

II

The Lamps Go Out

I

IT WAS a bright morning in Geneva that memorable day of September 19, 1931. As I walked into the spacious dining room of the Hotel Metropole for an early breakfast there was no one there except a few waiters who were chatting by the sunlit windows. After exchanging the usual civilities, "Wie geht es?" and "Sehr gut, danke," I sat down to my solitary coffee. The General Assembly of the League of Nations was in session and the Japanese delegation had established its headquarters at the Metropole. It was a quiet session so far and there was nothing for us to do except occasionally play golf or drive out to Lausanne for an afternoon tea. Certainly Europe was seething with unrest, tossed on the rising tide of depression, but the Far East appeared to be tranquil, content with its own fate and at peace with the world. In fact, the Far East seemed very far away that morning. Wondering how to profit by the fine weather, I reached mechanically for the *Journal de Genève* and glanced quickly through it. On the very last page my eyes were caught by a small item tucked away in a corner. It was a dispatch from Mukden which vaguely reported that there had been an outbreak of fighting the previous night, September 18, between Japanese and Chinese forces in the vicinity of Mukden and that one could hear the distant rumble of artillery. I almost dismissed it as one of those baseless rumors circulated periodically in China; but perhaps by instinct I hurried to the delegates' suite and reported the matter. No one took the news seriously, but just to make sure a brief telegram of inquiry was sent to Tokyo, citing the *Journal de Genève*.

Soon afterward, evidently crossing this telegram on the way, an urgent dispatch arrived from the home government informing us of the first clash of our Manchurian garrison with Chinese forces which had allegedly attacked and destroyed a section of the South

Manchurian Railway that we controlled. The report in the *Journal* was true! In a few months' time the whole of Manchuria was on fire. The Manchurian intervention was now in full stride and our delegation was inundated by telegrams pouring in from all corners of the globe—from Japan, China, America, and Europe. No one of us understood the true nature of the situation. We rather naïvely believed at first in the repeated but vain assurances of our own government that they were confident of bringing about a local settlement of the conflict. Yet the situation became steadily more serious as the powerful Kwantung army ran amuck, defying the orders of the government in Tokyo. Thus it was that the spark was set to the tinderbox of Asia which ten years later exploded into the Pacific war.

2

The fatal weakness of our diplomacy was that it did not command sufficiently wide support at home. The foreign service was a service indeed foreign to the nation at large. Our diplomats understood but little the complex problems of the people, who in turn failed to appreciate the difficult position of the diplomats who represented them abroad. Diplomacy is a unique profession and it requires a number of years to create a competent service. This was particularly true in Japan where unfamiliarity with foreign thought and speech presents a formidable barrier to anyone desiring to deal with international activities. Consequently foreign ministers and ambassadors were generally appointed from among the career diplomats even during the heyday of political parties if only because few people other than professionally trained diplomats were at all qualified to deal with foreign affairs. The diplomats in fact had become a *corps d'élite*, a class apart in the public service, or, to put it more cynically, peacocks in a gilded cage.

All this tended to foster a peculiar atmosphere in the "Kasumigaseki," or "misty barrier," a popular name for our Foreign Office derived from its location. Owing to their preoccupation with external affairs and their extended absence from home, our diplomats were generally quite ignorant of the situation in Japan and often assumed an attitude of such indifference to the political and economic questions at home that they lost what little influence they

had once possessed. There gradually developed, it seemed, a "misty barrier" between the Foreign Office and the people. The Kasumigaseki also drifted away from the rest of the government. The result was that the foreign minister was in the cabinet but often not of it. Thus the Foreign Office became isolated and diplomats abroad received and executed instructions which frequently ran counter to the realities at home.

Furthermore, since the time of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance which had served as the foundation of our foreign policy for nearly a quarter of a century, there has developed a Foreign Office tradition of cooperation with Great Britain and the United States. However, our relations with the United States and Great Britain gradually worsened after the outbreak of the Manchurian conflict in 1931. The efforts of the Foreign Office to arrest this deterioration did not enhance its prestige or popularity. On the contrary it was severely criticized for being too accommodating or "weak-kneed." The fighting services, the Army in particular, took care to discredit the Foreign Office in the eyes of the public. Other branches of government customarily deferred to the armed forces. The Foreign Office alone had the courage to challenge the military and to oppose their aim of aggression and aggrandizement.

Distrustful of the Kasumigaseki, the Army began to ignore it, finally embarking upon the policy of continental conquest which precipitated armed conflicts in China in 1931, 1932, and 1937, the latter a major war in all but name. Still the Foreign Office struggled in vain to restrain the Army. The Army, on its part, tried to destroy the Foreign Office. Under one pretext or another professional diplomats were passed by and generals were appointed as ambassadors to Manchukuo (an "independent state" after 1932), Germany, and the Soviet Union. The Navy, not to be outdone, supplied an ambassador to the United States. During the most critical period of our diplomatic negotiations with the United States prior to the outbreak of the war in 1941 a full admiral sat at the desk of the foreign minister.

With all due respect for their patriotism, I wonder if these warrior-diplomats—the word itself is incongruous—would not have done better in barracks or on board ship. In 1940 the Army set up the "Cabinet Board of Information," which virtually amounted to a ministry of propaganda, in order to absorb into its

structure the Information Bureau of the Foreign Office. The latter had gained the displeasure of the Army by opposing its policies. The following year the "Asia Development Board" was created with the aim of taking from the Foreign Office the direction of policies toward China, a country which the Army had considered as its own domain for many years. This was followed by the establishment in the same year of the "Greater East Asia Ministry" with a view to taking over from the Foreign Office the administration of policies toward the Asiatic continent and the South Seas region then under our military occupation. These detractions from its authority were all enforced in the face of determined but ineffectual resistance on the part of the Foreign Office.

Parallel to this attack on the Foreign Office, the Army also indulged freely in irregular adventures in diplomacy. There were, for example, the negotiations for a rapprochement with Germany which the Army initiated in the summer of 1938 without the knowledge or approval of the Foreign Office. A group of misguided men in the Foreign Office curried favor with the military under the influence of our ambassadors to Berlin and Rome. But although for a while it looked as if the Kasumigaseki might come entirely under the control or influence of the Army its traditional good sense finally triumphed. The majority of its officials remained highly critical of the alliance with the Axis powers and opposed to the war. Even during the war years they remained at heart friendly to the United States and Great Britain and adhered to the view that Japan could attain peace and prosperity only by maintaining amicable relations with these two nations. Unfortunately they were, as already explained, quite powerless, and their views were largely disregarded, to the great harm of the nation at large.

When the Tripartite Pact, or alliance between Japan, Germany, and Italy, was concluded in September, 1940, I happened to be attached to the London embassy. Shigemitsu was the ambassador. It was but one day before the publication of the pact that our embassy was informed from Tokyo about the impending announcement. That was the first official information we received about the alliance. From London we had been persistently warning the home government against a hasty commitment to the Axis, stressing the necessity of cultivating cordial relations with the democratic powers. Such warnings were regarded by the

Army as mere nuisances. That was perhaps why news of the alliance was kept from us until the last moment.

Again, when negotiations between Tokyo and Washington entered the crucial stages in the winter of 1941 we in the Foreign Office were totally unaware of the extent to which the fighting services had completed preparations for war. We had no way of knowing, therefore, that the breaking off of the parley would probably mean an immediate opening of hostilities—hostilities which we were trying our best to avert. The Army and Navy confided nothing to the Foreign Office, which continued negotiations without any knowledge of their true intentions, not to speak of their strategic plans. Our efforts were thus completely pointless. As a matter of fact the American government was far better informed than we of the secret designs of our military. Hence success in the negotiations was difficult to achieve.

In short, those normally responsible for diplomacy had hardly any control of it during the decade preceding the war, despite sincere efforts to the contrary. Our endeavors for peace were doomed to be futile. The truth is that although we possessed diplomats we did not have diplomacy. This was largely because our diplomats had no roots in the soil of their own country. They could not avert war; they could not bring about its early termination.

3

What was the cause of the ascendancy of the military in Japan? Fundamentally it lay, I believe, in the peculiar national structure which was created at the time of the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Commodore Perry's impatient knock at our door rudely awakened us from an isolation of over two hundred years. Imperialism was rampant in the nineteenth century. The Far East was in turmoil, beset by the superior forces of the Western powers who were seeking fresh conquests in this part of the world. China, a rich spoil, finally succumbed to European pressure after resisting it for over a century and a half. Japan was thus spared—for a while. But as a grave menace to her independence persisted, the leaders of Japan thought it essential to mobilize her powers to resistance quickly in order to avoid China's fate.

Consequently a hermit nation of feudal heritages was transformed overnight. It was a marvelous feat. It meant, however, that the construction of the new state was necessarily hasty and the work remained far from complete. In this transition the samurai or warriors, who had been the governing class under the old feudal regime, naturally took the leadership and soon developed an autocratic bureaucracy which formed the backbone of the new government. These bureaucrats were ably supported by the rising merchant class. This alliance constituted the foundation of the new order. Singularly enough, the farmers did not play any important role, although they made up the bulk of the population. There were sporadic Jacqueries but these only served to consolidate the position of the bureaucrats, who discovered in them a justification for setting up a centralized, autocratic government of a highly militant nature.

In fact the Restoration was a revolution from above, not from below, and as such left most of the forces of the feudal society intact. Such great haste was required in modernizing the antiquated nation that there was no time to foster democratic conceptions among the people or train them in the methods of genuine popular government. The result was that the Japanese people did not develop any sense of political freedom. Indeed, a liberal government was a luxury which the bureaucrats could have ill afforded to provide. This is proved clearly by the fact that the political parties founded in 1874 had to dissolve in 1884 after an unsuccessful experiment of ten brief years. The bureaucrats regarded these parties with deep suspicion and brought pressure to bear upon them by drastically curtailing freedom of speech and right of assembly. In that same year, 1884, the peerage system was created: the feudal lords were elevated to the rank of peers with hereditary titles and the privilege of sitting in the House of Peers. These feudal lords had surrendered their fiefs in 1869 but had been handsomely compensated from the national treasury and had invested heavily in business and industries, thus retaining their hold upon the economy of the nation. In 1889 a constitution was granted by the Emperor; and the political parties re-emerged with the convocation of the first Diet the following year. But the Diet failed to make any impression upon the power of the bureaucratic

oligarchy which had by this time entrenched itself securely in the government.

In order to safeguard her precarious independence under constant foreign pressure, it was an urgent necessity for Japan to create a modern national defense force with the utmost speed. Military affairs therefore took precedence over other business of government, a fact which tended inevitably to strengthen the position of the military. Moreover, the Supreme Military Command enjoyed extraordinary prerogatives under the Constitution, making it entirely independent of the civil government. These prerogatives were considered unimpeachable and unquestionable. By exploiting them the fighting services consolidated an unassailable position which was no less than that of a state within the state. This independence of the Supreme Command was the worst feature of the Meiji Constitution. The fact that the fighting services were absolutely free from political control was largely responsible for the abuse of power by the military. The Army exercised power in the name of the Emperor, exploiting the majesty with which he was surrounded. The leaders of the Restoration deliberately fostered the religious mythology surrounding the imperial dynasty in order to achieve a fusion of the political and theocratic ideas in the person of the Emperor. This elevated the prestige of the dynasty. Emperors of flesh and blood were worshiped as immortal gods. But the Emperor so worshiped was merely the reflection of the moon in the water and not the moon shining in the sky. The Emperor was at once a godlike symbol and an empty figurehead. The real moon was the military who exercised the power and enjoyed all its benefit. God and Caesar were synthesized in the crown, but the Emperor was actually neither the one nor the other. The Supreme Command was almighty: God and Caesar in one. But even this combination took orders from—the younger officers! Generals and admirals merely performed according to their dictates.

National defense required the development of heavy industries. The government consequently at great pains built up strategic industries such as steel and shipping and later sold them to business firms which soon expanded into powerful financial combines. These were the forerunners of the now much-celebrated zaibatsu,

or holding companies, of recent history. This was the beginning of the alliance of the "sword and yen."

For forty years, up to 1896, Japanese diplomacy concentrated upon the revision of the unequal treaties which had been imposed upon the country in the early years of her intercourse with the Western powers. The revision was effected only after Japan's victory over China in 1895. Ten years later Japan fought and vanquished Russia with the result that her influence replaced that of Russia in the Far East. Another decade later Japan joined the Allies in the first World War and securely established her position on the Asiatic continent, where by then she had gained important markets for her rapidly expanding industries. For industrialization had been promoted as the only possible solution of the problem of her ever expanding population. The prestige of the fighting services rose tremendously after each victorious war. Continental expansion, however, created diplomatic entanglements and heavier and heavier armaments were called for in order to prepare for eventual war. This in turn increased the power of the military. Thus it was that the small weak nation swiftly rose to the position of a world power under the leadership of the militant bureaucrats, the empire builders of the East.

Our people lacked any training in the art of self-government and little suspected the evil consequences of military domination. It is commonly said that the "hive spirit" is a prominent feature of Japanese political concepts. Our people make a virtue of self-renunciation and this has been the basis of our unique social solidarity. "It develops relationships between master and servant, protector and protégé, which are so much the product of our culture that it is impossible to conceive of the one side resenting or the other abusing them. They make for a certain dependence and absence of self-reliance. The essence of the Japanese spirit is eagerness on the part of the individuals to find a person worthy to be served with unremitting devotion."¹

Certainly this is not what democracy thrives on. When the individual is submerged in unremitting devotion to a leader, the result is likely to be dictatorship. Ruth Benedict, the noted cultural anthropologist, who studied the problems of Japan as a member

1. M. Yasuoka, quoted by Hugh Byas, *Government by Assassination* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), pp. 257-258. (Ed.)

of the OWI, is right when she says in her instructive book, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, that the society of Japan is based upon hierarchy and that "her confidence in hierarchy is basic in her whole notion of man's relation to his fellow man and of man's relations to the State . . ." ² Hierarchy means taking one's proper station in the social structure. "In the family and in personal relations, age, generation, sex, and class dictate proper behavior. In government, religion, the Army, and industry, areas are carefully separated into hierarchies where neither the higher nor the lower may without penalty over-step their prerogatives." ³ It was under such a hierarchical system that our people have developed the habit of uncritical obedience to authority. Add to this our inordinate fondness for regimentation and a peculiar weakness for military display, and it is no wonder that the Army should have found it easy to enforce a despotic militarism. Even to the end of the war the masses did not seriously question the right of the military to exercise overlordship: in spite of the shattering defeats they remained the faithful fools who follow the tattered flag.

4

We have seen that the ascendancy of the military was embodied in the political structure of the Meiji Restoration. After the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919, however, the rising democratic sentiment that affected the whole world met a sympathetic response in the hearts of the Japanese people. The entire nation passionately embraced the new creed. But democracy did not long remain current. It flourished for a while and then passed away like a coin of old mintage.

Politically, however, the Washington conference of 1922, which settled questions of the Pacific, was far more important for Japan than was the Versailles Treaty. At Washington the naval ratio of 5-5-3 was established for Great Britain, the United States, and Japan respectively. The Four Power Agreement of Great Britain, the United States, Japan, and France replaced the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, and the Nine Power Treaty was concluded in order to regulate the Chinese question. For a decade, until 1931,

2. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1946, p. 43.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

Japan observed these agreements faithfully. Concord and conciliation with Great Britain and the United States was the guiding spirit of her foreign policy, and patient conciliation toward China in spite of frequent provocation.

There were two factors, however, which made the Washington agreements rather unrealistic. One was the absence of the Soviet Union from the conference table. In 1922 Russia was still "quarantined," suffering the effects of her tragic revolution. Her influence in the Far East, as elsewhere, was practically nil. No cognizance was therefore taken of her by the conference. But it was obvious that she could not be excluded for long from international agreements concerning the Pacific basin. Another disturbing factor was the utter failure of "young" China to avail herself of the splendid opportunities afforded by the Nine Power Treaty, under which the powers agreed to provide China with "the fullest and most unembarrassed opportunity . . . to develop and maintain for herself an effective and stable government."

For Japan, with her vital interests in Manchuria, the attitudes of Russia and China were naturally of prime concern. History demonstrates that from ancient times the threat of invasions of the Japanese islands usually originated in the north. By 1930 the situation on the continent had become a source of grave anxiety to Japan. Civil war had raged in China since 1927 when Chiang Kai-shek embarked on the famous Northern Expedition with the assistance of General Galen, alias Borodin, a Soviet agent taking his orders direct from Moscow. There followed after 1927 an outburst of intransigent nationalism in China, based partly upon her traditional xenophobia and partly upon new communistic influences. The Chinese began to indulge in violent antiforeign agitation, and Japan, a convenient scapegoat, was often made its target.

Japan is a country small in area, smaller than the single state of Texas, and yet she possessed a population in her home islands alone of nearly eighty millions, a population expanding at the rate of one million a year. The population of Japan proper has more than doubled in the last sixty years. Its density per square mile of arable land in 1930 was more than 2,900, a density not equaled in any other country on the globe.⁴ Countries like Great Britain,

4. By 1940 this figure had risen above 3,000. The corresponding figures for Great Britain were 2,170 and for Belgium 1,709. G. T. Trewartha, *A Reconnaissance Geography of Japan* (University of Wisconsin, 1934), p. 28 and n. 22. (Ed.)

France, and Belgium possess great colonial empires which supply them with natural resources, provide markets for industrial products, and offer outlets for surplus population. In 1935 the United Kingdom contained less than 1 per cent of the people of the British Empire. France in 1931 included approximately 40 per cent of the people under the French flag. In contrast, Japan proper in 1930 held slightly over 70 per cent of the total population of the empire. Her population had long ago arrived at the saturation point, and the still rising pressure gave prospect of tremendous difficulties. In addition the country is very poor in natural resources and must import the principal raw materials for its industry.

Under the circumstances Japan had either to send emigrants abroad or export goods. In her case, however, emigration did not provide a solution of the population question, as her people were excluded from most places by unfriendly legislation. As emigration was denied her she turned to export. In fact, industrialization was the only remaining means of insuring an adequate standard of living for the nation. Population pressure is not necessarily unbearable so long as industries can be properly developed. Industrialization makes it possible to export more and so in turn buy more. But industrialization is risky without secure access to raw materials and to overseas markets which will absorb manufactured goods. Freedom of trade has long been dead. Economic nationalism, so conspicuous after the first World War, became more general after the great depression of 1929. The nations vied with one another in erecting trade barriers and restricting their imports.

All this naturally caused serious economic dislocation and hardship throughout the world, and particularly in Japan, which found it extremely difficult either to import raw materials or to export manufactured articles. With her ever increasing pressure of population, her lack of outlets for manufactured goods and emigrants, and her serious deficiency of basic raw materials, she was truly in a desperate predicament.

Thus with economic depression throwing our national economy out of gear, the subsistence of the masses became extremely difficult to secure. The country was in the throes of vast social unrest sometimes accompanied by communistic disturbances, for those were the days of "parlor pinks" and "Marx boys." Alarmed by this, young officers of the fighting services organized reckless plots to

overthrow the government by violence in order to secure drastic reforms. After 1931, the fateful year of the Manchurian intervention, such attempts became frequent, as witnessed, for example, by the March incident and the October incident of that year.

The March incident is said to have been approved by General Koiso⁵ (prime minister in 1944), who was then director of the General Affairs Bureau of the War Ministry, the most important office in the Army. An armed mob, including the leftist element, was to have been mobilized to attack the Diet while in session and force the cabinet to resign. Some three hundred bombs were allegedly supplied by the Army in order to blow up the cabinet building and the various headquarters of the major political parties. It was the fashion of the time to blame political parties for misgovernment. Koiso wanted, it is said, to install General Ugaki,⁶ war minister, as premier in order to carry out a drastic renovation of the political and economic structure of the country under a military dictatorship. The plot miscarried, as Ugaki changed his mind on the eve of its execution. He dissociated himself from it because of the disapproval of General Mazaki who was responsible for the tranquillity of the capital.

The October incident was also abortive. Young officers of the Army and Navy conspired to create a disturbance in Manchuria as a preliminary to an armed uprising at home. An incident in Manchuria would, they calculated, incite the hard-pressed people to mob violence and pave the way for a military dictatorship. They planned to raise a general insurrection on or about October 16, and plotted the wholesale murder of the cabinet ministers and of liberal statesmen. They planned to occupy the War Office, General Staff offices, police headquarters, power stations, Tokyo Radio, telephone exchanges, and newspaper offices. This plot, however, was unearthed by the police just in time and the ring-leaders were arrested. Moreover, the fighting in Manchuria had

5. Gen. Kuniaki Koiso, the so-called "Tiger of Korea" and alleged member of the Black Dragon Society, was ordered arrested as a war criminal by the Allied occupation authorities on November 19, 1945. USSBS, *Japan's Struggle to End the War*, p. 27. He was tried, convicted, and sentenced to life imprisonment. *New York Times* (November 12, 1948), p. 1. (Ed.)

6. Gen. Kazushige Ugaki had been several times war minister in different cabinets. He had been governor general of Korea in 1931-36 and foreign minister in 1938. *Who's Who in Japan with China and Korea, 1941-42* (The Who's Who in Japan Publishing Office, 1941). (Ed.)

broken out in the meantime, and much sooner than they had anticipated. Incidentally, this shows clearly that there was a school of thought in the Army holding that an armed intervention on the continent would provide an ideal opportunity for them to seize power and institute reforms. Conquest abroad and totalitarian economy at home were inseparable in their minds.

There is a significant difference between the two incidents. It is generally believed that while the March incident was plotted by officers of high rank, that of October was engineered by young officers mostly below the rank of lieutenant colonel. After the defection of Generals Ugaki, Koiso, and other high officers in the March incident, the younger officers began to distrust their seniors' revolutionary zeal. Knowing, however, that the senior officers entertained views similar to theirs regarding the reformation of the national structure through a forcible seizure of power, they decided to embark upon their own plot, confident that if they did so their superiors would follow. Thus the young officers began to take the initiative, forcing the issue upon the higher officers and thereby greatly weakening the discipline of the Army. It is a most significant fact that the real power gradually became vested in a group of fiery officers who asserted themselves during the following decade as the driving force of a reckless expansionist policy.

These abortive coups were an alarming indication of the restless temper of the times. Soon a train of assassinations led to the May 15 incident of 1932, an exceptionally eventful year. On January 8 an attempt was made by a Korean to assassinate the Emperor. Barely three weeks later our marines in Shanghai clashed with the local Chinese army which was dominated by Communists,⁷ necessitating the dispatch there of a considerable army force.

The country was then on the eve of a general election. It was hotly contested between the Minseito party in office and the Seiyukai party in opposition. The latter supported the expansionist policy while the former opposed it. In February, in the midst of

7. There would seem to be no substantial body of evidence to the effect that the Chinese forces involved with the Japanese at Shanghai in 1932 were "dominated by Communists." This statement by the author is in line with the numerous official and unofficial Japanese statements after 1931 to the effect that Japan's aggressions on China constituted an anti-Communist war, or an effort to eradicate communism from China. By 1950 it would seem clear that the net effect of their aggressions was exactly the contrary. (Ed.)

the election campaign, Inouye, former finance minister in the Wakatsuki (Minseito) cabinet, was assassinated. He had strenuously opposed the Manchurian adventure. In March Baron Dan, an eminent financier and managing director of the Mitsui holding company, was shot dead. These acts of violence were perpetrated by fanatical young men, thirteen in all, who were banded together in a patriotic gang called the "Blood Brotherhood" which served as a civilian contingent in the young officers' murderous plots. The gang marked as their victims a score of other liberal statesmen and members of the "privileged classes." These included the surviving elder statesman, Prince Saionji; the lord keeper of the imperial seal, Count Makino; the former prime minister and president of the Minseito party, Baron Wakatsuki; Baron Shidehara, who was foreign minister in the Wakatsuki cabinet and had been prime minister in 1945; Prince Tokugawa, president of the House of Peers; Ikeda, managing director of the Mitsui Bank; and several other dignitaries. They stopped when they had murdered Inouye and Dan, however, as they began to fear that the future assassinations would be difficult to carry out on account of increased police surveillance. Thereupon the young officers took the matter in hand.

Toward dusk of a bright Sunday in May, 1932, four young naval officers and five army cadets, all in uniform, invaded the prime minister's residence and shot Inukai, the aged premier, dead. Other contingents attacked Count Makino's house, the metropolitan police headquarters, the headquarters of the Seiyukai party, the Bank of Japan, and the Mitsubishi Bank. This is known as the May 15 incident. The young officers later confessed that they wished to prepare the stage for a military government and drastically purge all liberals in influential positions in the government and business. In their view all the ills of the times were attributable to the corrupt practices of the political parties and to monopolistic exploitation by capitalists. They therefore wanted to put an end to parliamentary government and severely curtail the capitalistic enterprises. They had accepted the theories of state socialism and verged on communism. They desired to rescue agriculture from its plight and to reconstruct the country as an agrarian state with soldiers and farmers as its main foundation. All this is easy to under-

stand if we recall the fact that the farmers had played only a negligible role in the Meiji Restoration and that our soldiers and sailors were largely recruited from the impoverished countryside. It was, in a sense, a movement of protest on the part of the forgotten men at the base of the social pyramid.

It was significant that the coup was organized by naval officers. They were avowedly motivated by a desire to revenge themselves on the liberal leaders for recommending to the throne the London Disarmament Treaty of 1930. The controversies which raged over this treaty were stirring the Navy to the depths. At Washington Japan had accepted a ratio of 60 per cent of the battleship strength allotted to Great Britain and to the United States. Naturally critical of this, the Navy became even more so when the London conference of 1930 extended the same ratio to auxiliary vessels. What was worse, the Hamaguchi cabinet (Minseito) overruled the Naval General Staff and accepted the London agreement in defiance of its violent protests. Consequently the Navy nursed acute grievances and this proved to be the deepest cause of the political unrest that manifested itself during the following years. The young officers deeply resented what they regarded as a violation of the prerogatives of the Supreme Command and condemned the statesmen around the throne for recommending the treaty. Already Prime Minister Hamaguchi had paid for the treaty with his life and died from an assassin's bullet in November, 1930.

The nation was deeply shocked by the May 15 incident and by the evident deterioration of discipline in the fighting services. But the Army, unabashed, lost no time in asserting its power. General Koiso, then vice minister of war, reportedly declared himself against the continuance of party government. As a result Admiral Saito, a nonparty man, was appointed successor to Inukai, the murdered premier. The constitutional practice of the two major political parties alternately forming a cabinet responsible to the Diet was abandoned, and the Seiyukai, the majority party, was banned from office. Such was the aversion of the military to professional politicians that they discarded the Seiyukai in spite of its favorable attitude of expansion abroad. The heyday of political parties was now over: the incident struck a mortal blow at the all-too-weak elements of constitutional government in Japan.

At the beginning of 1933 two outstanding events took place. In Germany Adolf Hitler became Reichskanzler; in the United States Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated president. As fate would have it, these two historical figures appeared on the stage at the same time and when both Europe and America were in the grip of an unprecedented economic depression, accompanied by grave political unrest.

In March Japan announced her intention to withdraw from the League of Nations, deliberately choosing a path of isolation which was in no wise splendid. This was against the wish of the Emperor, who preferred to maintain cooperation with the democratic powers and in particular with Great Britain and the United States. In the imperial rescript issued on this occasion the Emperor specifically instructed the government to state that by withdrawing from the League we did not intend to isolate ourselves in this remote corner of the Far East and that we desired to cultivate cordial relations with all nations. In spite of this solicitude on the part of the Emperor to follow a policy of concord and conciliation with Great Britain and the United States, our relations with those powers deteriorated steadily due mainly to the growing conflicts of interest over Manchuria and China. This naturally resulted in hostility toward these powers among our people, who suspected them of willfully obstructing the fulfillment of our national destiny.

The Army was not slow in exploiting such a feeling. Subtle propaganda was intensified to discredit the liberal leaders friendly toward the democratic powers. In July of the same year a plot for the armed overthrow of the Saito cabinet was uncovered. This was known as the God-sent troops incident, as the extremists chose to call themselves God's Soldiers. The original plan was to send some three thousand men against various government buildings, party headquarters, and other public installations, attacking on the ground and from the air with the assistance of navy bombers. The capital was to have been plunged into chaos, leading to the imposition of martial law and the eventual setting up of a military dictatorship.

The most shocking feature of this plot was that it was financed by one of the directors of a well-known department store in Tokyo

who had lost heavily on the stock exchange and who planned to repair the loss by administering a shock to the stock market. The borderland between crime and patriotism was indeed narrow.

Singularly, these violent crimes, actual or planned, were more or less condoned by the public. The Army whitewashed them on the ground that they were outbursts of patriotic ardor caused by dissatisfaction with the ills of the time. When the would-be marauders were on trial, the Army used the trial for the dissemination of that idea, and the people responded with a mass wave of sympathy for the accused. The result was most unfortunate in that the culprits got off with comparatively light sentences. None of the officers in the May 15 incident was sentenced to death; the longest term of imprisonment was fifteen years for two of the ringleaders. Even more lenient was the decision in the case of God's Soldiers: none received any punishment whatever! Such laxity of justice inevitably led to the increase of violence. The nation was gradually led to servile submission to the armed minority.

In July, 1934, the Saito cabinet fell in consequence of a financial scandal. It was succeeded by another nonparty cabinet with Admiral Okada as prime minister. Both cabinets, outgoing and incoming, were regarded as conservative in character in that they stood for the maintenance of the status quo at home. The young officers and extremists were severely critical of the government since, in their opinion, it catered to the welfare of the privileged few at the expense of the impoverished masses. They maintained that the Manchurian intervention irrevocably committed Japan to a policy of challenging the desire of the democratic powers to preserve the status quo. If such were the external policy, there should, they reasoned, be a parallel policy of destroying the status quo at home. Here again the conduct of foreign affairs was to be used to enforce extensive domestic reforms.

Prince Saionji had recommended Admiral Okada to the throne as prime minister in anticipation of a difficult situation arising in the critical year 1936 when the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 was due to expire. This would begin the unstable "nontreaty period" in the naval relations between Japan on the one hand and the United States and Great Britain on the other. In December, 1934, our government formally denounced the Washington Treaty. The resulting sense of crisis, which was heightened by an

organized propaganda campaign of the Navy, was still further increased in January, 1936, by the failure of the London Conference for Naval Disarmament. At this conference Japan demanded a common upper limit, or parity with the United States and Great Britain.

I attended this conference as a member of our delegation. It was led by Admiral Nagano, representing the Navy, and Ambassador Nagai, representing the Foreign Office. Soon after our arrival at London the delegation split into two groups. That led by Nagano insisted on immediately walking out of the conference. The other, under Nagai, tried to obtain a compromise and to avoid a break. I supported Nagai, but his position became impossible in view of the chauvinism of the public in Japan.

Frankly speaking, the theory of our proposed "common upper limit" was rather obscure. At the Palladium, a vaudeville theater in London, a number called "The Japanese Proposal" was presented. A black curtain slowly descended on the empty stage with the announcement, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the Japanese proposal!" And when it fell to me to explain the formula of a "common upper limit" to the foreign press I did not know what to say. But I collected as many cans as possible of the cigarette known as 5-5-5 and had them put out in the press room of our delegation's headquarters. When I was questioned about our proposal, I referred the journalists to the label 5-5-5 on those cans. There was an outburst of laughter. But in spite of the most genial cooperation between our delegation and the press, misunderstanding increased as the conference went on.

At a later interview with the press I distributed the cigarette called 3-3-3. I said that Japan wished to reduce her armaments, providing she could secure parity with Great Britain and the United States. In fact it was too bad, I added, that there was no brand of cigarette called 0-0-0. Once again the press seemed to approve. As I now think of it, it would have been highly beneficial if Japan could have consented to scrap our whole Navy in order to help achieve universal disarmament.⁸

The London conference was the last of the international con-

8. Japan withdrew from the conference on January 15, 1936, when the other powers rejected her demand for a common upper limit. *New York Times* (January 16, 1936), p. 1. (Ed.)

ferences in which Japan participated. Before our delegation returned home another serious disturbance had broken out in Tokyo, later to be known, from the date of its occurrence, as the February 26 incident.

Early in the snowy morning of that day in 1936 some 1,500 troops led by young army officers marched out of the barracks in the metropolitan area and besieged the prime minister's residence. Okada was at first believed killed, but he miraculously escaped unhurt. He was hiding in the closet in the servants' quarters where he remained until rescued two days later. The rebels killed Colonel Matsuo, his relative who resembled Okada, thinking he was the prime minister. The circumstances of the prime minister's escape are more thrilling than most true-life mystery stories. Admiral Suzuki, the grand chamberlain, was severely wounded. Admiral Saito, then lord privy seal, and the finance minister, Takahashi, an old statesman of great popularity, were murdered by a volley of machine-gun fire, while Prince Saionji, last of the elder statesmen, and Count Makino, the former lord privy seal, succeeded in eluding the assassins. All of those marked for death were staunch liberals and were regarded by the plotters as undesirable influences around the throne. The rebellious troops occupied the prime minister's residence, the War Office, and metropolitan police headquarters, as well as a number of government buildings, and encamped in the central district of the city for four days, defying all orders to disperse. On February 29 they were finally persuaded to return to barracks. This was done only after the Emperor had ordered the vacillating minister of war to proclaim the marauders rebels and threaten them with punitive action.

This incident was the most outrageous of its kind but it was in substance only an extension of the incident of May 15, 1932. The young officers involved were similar to those who had led the coup in the March and October incidents. But the nation was stunned to see the troops march out in open rebellion. Such a mutiny had never happened before. It was an infamy and a disgrace. The people openly criticized the collapse of all discipline in the Army. The Army, however, did not take the rebuke with meek submission. On the contrary it accused the political parties of corruption and the capitalist enterprisers of exploitation.

In these circumstances it was difficult to select the succeeding

prime minister. Prince Saionji recommended Prince Konoye and urged him to accept the imperial appointment; but he declined and Hirota,⁹ foreign minister in the Okada cabinet, was installed as prime minister. Hirota offered the Foreign Ministry to Yoshida, a liberal diplomat and son-in-law of Count Makino, who had been prime minister in 1930. He accepted, and helped the premier to select the cabinet ministers. The Army at once protested against the inclusion in the cabinet of Yoshida and other liberal statesmen, threatening its noncooperation. Hirota had no choice but to submit. The Army continually asserted its arbitrary influence, so that from the outset of its precarious career the new cabinet was at the mercy of the military.

The February 26 incident thus sealed the fate of liberal government in Japan. It completely stifled any effective opposition to the Army, for such opposition meant instantaneous death by a volley of machine-gun fire. In fact the February 26 incident had completed what the May 15 incident had left undone. Organized violence now ruled supreme in a land dominated by the military. But so thick was the veil which obscured the operations of government from the eyes of the public that it was widely supposed that in the suppression of the revolt and the execution of its leaders military violence had finally received its quietus.

Incidentally, one of the victims of the February 26 uprising was General Watanabe, inspector general of military training. The other victims were all stout opponents of the military, but he was an exception. It showed that something was "out of joint" within the Army which, in fact, was honeycombed with contending factions. As a matter of fact, there were then two schools of thought even in the Army. One school, called Kodoha (Imperial Way), was headed by Generals Araki and Mazaki, respectively war minister and inspector general of military training. It was of the opinion that Japan should concentrate her energy on consolidating the gains in Manchuria. This group was suspicious of Soviet Russia and wanted to erect in Manchuria an impregnable

9. Koki Hirota, premier March, 1936, to February, 1937, was a prominent member of the notorious Black Dragon Society of Japan and had once declared that war with the United States might best begin in February, 1941. On December 2, 1945, he was ordered arrested by the authorities of the Allied occupation of Japan. He was tried as a war criminal, convicted, and sentenced to death. On December 23, 1948, he was executed. *New York Times* (December 23, 1948), p. 1. (Ed.)

barrier against Russian pressure. The other school, called Toseiha (Unified Control), included officers like Generals Koiso, Tojo, and Suzuki. It desired to extend the conquest into China proper. It was supported by young officers implicated in such plots as the March and October incidents. These officers desired continued tension abroad in order to enable them to institute drastic changes at home. As their group name indicated, they advocated a controlled economy or state socialism. These two schools vied with one another for the supreme control of the Army. Masaki, who wished to purge the Army of the expansionist elements, was himself expelled from office in July, 1935. The rebellious troops concerned in the February 26 incident were led by officers who were followers of Masaki, and they revenged themselves upon Watanabe, who had succeeded Mazaki as inspector general.

This time justice was swift and severe: the ringleaders were punished—seventeen by death and six by life imprisonment. Moreover, there was no sensational element in these trials, as there was in the case of the May 15 incident. Cynical observers were inclined to believe that the Toseiha or Tojo faction had taken advantage of the uprising to crush their rivals. At any rate, there was in their view no necessity for resorting to violence, as the Army had been in full control of the situation and entirely dominated the government. Purged of its rivals, the Army was now completely controlled by the Toseiha, the advocates of continental expansion.

Meanwhile Europe was also in turmoil. Germany, taking advantage of the Italo-Abyssinian conflict, declared her intention to rearm in March, 1935. One year later, on March 7, 1936, Hitler marched into the Rhineland. This was exactly two days before the inauguration of the Hirota cabinet. In July a civil war flared up in Spain, which for years taxed the resources of European diplomacy.

The tense European situation offered encouragement to our expansionist Army. In November the Suiyuan affair occurred. A Mongolian army under ill-concealed Japanese guidance invaded Suiyuan province in north China and suffered disgraceful defeats at the hands of the Chinese Army. While the fighting continued, Chiang Kai-shek visited Sian in December in order to inspect the troops. There he was taken prisoner by Chang Hsueh-liang, the notorious war lord who had been ousted from Manchuria by the

Japanese Army. This Sian affair is an important landmark in the history of the Far East because as a price for his release from captivity Chiang agreed to an alliance with the Communist Army for the purpose of resisting Japan. Nobody foresaw then that this would so endanger Sino-Japanese relations that it would finally, in 1937, provoke a full-scale war lasting over eight years.¹⁰ The policy of expansion on Japan's part further aggravated our relations with the democratic powers which began with increased vigor to oppose our infringements on their vested rights in China.

As a result our Army came gradually to favor an alliance with Germany. Hirota, however, would not go so far. As a compromise, the Anti-Comintern Pact was concluded in October, 1936. The Army, not satisfied with this half measure, engineered the overthrow of the cabinet early in the next year. Hirota, however, had made a broad concession to the Army when he agreed to modify existing regulations so that ministers of the Army and Navy could be appointed only from among the generals and admirals on the active list. Previously officers on the reserve list had also been eligible. The military's hold on the government was now complete: they could make or unmake a cabinet at their pleasure by withdrawing, or refusing to nominate, the service minister.

When Hirota resigned the Emperor entrusted General Ugaki with the task of forming a cabinet. Ugaki tried hard but his efforts proved futile. The Army refused to supply a war minister, partly on account of Ugaki's defection in the March incident. This showed the real meaning of Hirota's recent concession. Ugaki abandoned his effort to form a cabinet after four days' struggle. Thereupon General Hayashi, the tool of the expansionists, formed the cabinet. He was forced to resign after a brief three months' career due to a defeat in the general election which he forced upon the nation in flagrant disregard of established political custom. Konoye was then persuaded to accept the premiership. The first Konoye cabinet was inaugurated in June, 1937.

10. It is at least arguable that Japan's China policy in 1931-36 was by nature designed to produce nothing less than the Communist-Nationalist alliance of December, 1936. To speak of this alliance as "endangering" Sino-Japanese relations is, to say the least, putting the cart before the horse. (Ed.)

6

Konoye had shown much hesitation when Prince Saionji recommended him as prime minister. He was popular in the nation but his administration was destined to be a tragic record of frustrations because of affairs in China. He had been in office barely a month when on July 7, 1937, an incident at the Marco Polo Bridge in the outskirts of Peiping set off an armed conflict between Japan and China. The China incident as it was termed, which at first appeared to be a minor skirmish, soon assumed serious dimensions and developed into a major war. In November of 1937 through the good offices of von Trautmann, German ambassador to China, Konoye tried to restore peace with Chiang Kai-shek's regime; these efforts failed, chiefly because Chiang did not trust the Japanese Army. Although Konoye sincerely desired to negotiate a peace he could not control the Army, which wanted to go on with the war. Konoye, it is interesting to note, wrote in his memoirs that if the Araki-Mazaki group had at that time been in control of the Army the China incident would not have developed into a war.

In December, 1937, Nanking fell; but the war went on. Hankow was occupied in October of 1938, and still the fighting dragged on. Chiang continued resistance from remote Chungking. The Japanese Army was now marching into wilderness, fighting against unlimited space. Disgusted and disheartened, Konoye resigned in January of 1939. Before he resigned he issued a lengthy statement declaring that the China incident had reached a new stage where it had become necessary for Japan to concentrate her main efforts on constructing a new order designed to ensure a lasting peace in East Asia. This amounted to a confession that the China affair could not be settled either by war or by diplomacy between Tokyo and Chungking. A solution must be sought by indirect means, that is to say, through an alliance with Germany. Konoye himself was thoroughly alarmed by the growing demand of the Army for such an alliance, and rather than face it he chose to resign.

Meanwhile Japanese relations with the democratic powers suffered seriously. But these powers were preoccupied in Europe, where one crisis followed another in quick succession. In March, 1938, Germany annexed Austria; and although peace was saved

at Munich in September, new tensions mounted with the crisis in Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain's assurances of "peace in our time" did not sound realistic.

As the China incident remained the primary concern of the succeeding cabinets, the question of an alliance with Germany was inevitably forced to the front. The Hiranuma¹¹ cabinet which succeeded that of Konoye held more than seventy sessions in futile deliberation over this weighty question. The Foreign Office and the Navy opposed the alliance. The Army resorted to all sorts of intrigues in order to drag the government into a full military alliance aimed at England and France as well as at the Soviet Union. To help these intrigues, General Oshima and Shiratori, ambassadors respectively to Germany and Italy, freely indulged in unauthorized activities, often completely disregarding instructions from the home government. When, however, Germany abruptly concluded the nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union in August, 1939, it was a bolt out of the blue for our government. Hiranuma resigned, professing complete astonishment over the baffling European situation.

His astonishment was natural. The deal between Moscow and Berlin was a shock even to the vigilant chancelleries of Europe. I was then in London and I still recall vividly the sudden confusion that was created by this pact. I hastened to the Foreign Office and found it in a great turmoil. The spokesman was speechless. The only comment available was two words uttered with profound disgust: "Those Russians!"

Churchill wonders whether Hitler or Stalin loathed this deal most. It was at most a temporary expedient and both were surely aware of it. But, all the same, "The fact that such an agreement could be made marks the culminating failure of British and French foreign policy and diplomacy over several years."¹²

Incidentally, it is interesting to note Hitler's statement that one of the causes of his move was Japan's refusal to take a clear stand as to the alliance against England. He wrote to Mussolini:¹³

11. Baron Kiichiro Hiranuma was ordered arrested as a war criminal December 2, 1945, by authorities of the Allied occupation of Japan. He was tried, convicted, and on November 12, 1948, sentenced to life imprisonment. *New York Times* (November 12, 1948), p. 1. (Ed.)

12. W. S. Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), p. 393.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 398.

The continued procrastination of the Japanese Cabinet in taking up a clear stand. Japan was ready for an alliance against Russia in which Germany—and in my view Italy—could only be interested in the present circumstances as a secondary consideration. She was not agreeable, however, to assuming any clear obligations regarding England—a decisive question from the German side, and I think also from Italy's.

The negotiations for the pact had proceeded secretly since mid-April when first suggested by the Soviet ambassador in Berlin. The climax came when German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop visited Moscow on August 23. The discussion that day lasted far into the night, finally resulting in agreement on the ten-year non-aggression pact. All this while the British military mission was kept waiting outside the Kremlin. It is said that Stalin and Ribbentrop exchanged much banter about England, both agreeing that she was weak and wanted to let others fight for her presumptuous claim to world domination.

It was, it would seem, not England but the Soviet Union that wanted to let others fight, for by safeguarding Germany's rear she was deliberately encouraging Hitler to wage war on England, thus setting off a great European conflict.

Two cabinets, those of General Abe and Admiral Yonai, covered the period from August, 1939, to July, 1940. In the latter year Konoye was once again called upon to form an administration. It was in the time of the Yonai¹⁴ cabinet that France collapsed—in June, 1940. With this spectacular victory of the Reichswehr, pro-Axis feeling ran high among our military. They regarded England's fate as sealed. Italy, anxious lest she be too late to claim her part of the spoils, hastily joined forces with Germany and stabbed prostrate France from behind. As President Roosevelt said, "The hand that held the dagger has struck it into the back of its neighbor."¹⁵ Our army impatiently demanded a full military alliance with Germany and Italy. But Yonai persistently opposed this demand, carefully avoiding hasty steps likely to lead to Japan's involvement in the European war. In this policy he was ably

14. Adm. Mitsumasa Yonai, IJN, was premier from January to July, 1940. U. S. Navy interrogators cited his "pro-American and anti-war tendencies" as keeping him out of responsible positions during the war until defeat was inevitable, when he joined the Suzuki cabinet. USSBS, *Interrogations of Japanese Officials*, p. 576. (Ed.)

15. Speech at the University of Virginia, June 10, 1940. *New York Times* (June 11, 1940), p. 6.

assisted by Foreign Minister Arita who was trying to improve relations with Great Britain and the United States. Therefore, in order to force Yonai and Arita out of office, the Army withdrew General Hata, the war minister, from the cabinet and refused to nominate any successor. It thus achieved the fall of the cabinet. It may be added here that General Hata agreed with Yonai's policy of noninvolvement but he was forced to resign by an official request from the army chief of staff, Prince Kanin, an influential member of the imperial family. Thus army intrigue was brought to bear even against the war minister.

Meanwhile Prince Konoye had resigned from the presidency of the Privy Council in anticipation of a cabinet change. In fact, the prince had been contemplating the setting up of a so-called "new political structure" in order to cope with the grave situation. The Army welcomed this idea, utilizing the opportunity to institute a totalitarian structure. Later on, Konoye's new political structure developed into the now notorious Imperial Rule Assistance Association and its kindred organizations. These replaced the old political parties, which disbanded themselves one after another in haste. Konoye wished to use these organizations to restrain the military, but the Army quickly established its influence over them so that his idea miscarried. What he had conceived of as a deterrent to military power became in fact an instrument of regimentation in the hands of the Army.

The second Konoye cabinet (July, 1940–July, 1941) emerged from these circumstances. The general public hailed Konoye's reappearance on the political scene. His cabinet also enjoyed the support of the Army which wanted to exploit the prestige and popularity of this young nobleman. Tojo became war minister and Matsuoka joined as foreign minister. The cabinet at once took up the question of an alliance with Germany and this was consummated two months later, on September 27.

When the alliance was first proposed by the German government in the summer of 1938, it was clearly directed against the Soviet Union. But by 1940 Germany was enjoying friendly relations with the Soviet Union under the terms of the nonaggression pact. Both Germany and Russia were aligned against Great Britain and to a lesser degree against the United States. Germany was at war with England while the Soviet Union was very unpopular in

England and America on account of the invasion of Finland which it had begun in November of the previous year. In consequence, the purpose of the alliance underwent a complete change. The triple alliance between Japan, Germany, and Italy which was finally agreed to by the Konoye cabinet was aimed primarily at Great Britain.

Nothing, however, was further removed from Konoye's mind than to engage upon war with the British Empire or the United States. On the contrary he was anxious to improve relations with them. It was his plan to use this alliance as a means of improving Japan's diplomatic position vis-à-vis the democratic powers.

As a matter of fact, Konoye believed it possible eventually to bring the Soviet Union into the Tripartite Pact, thus establishing a continental alliance between Germany, Italy, the Soviet Union, and Japan. This was a belief largely inspired by Germany. Indeed, when the Axis alliance was still in course of negotiation, the Wilhelmstrasse expressed its readiness to use its good offices with the Kremlin with a view to promoting better understanding between Japan and Russia as a preliminary to creating the four power alignment.¹⁶ If such a grouping of powers were to result it would, Konoye thought, go far toward restraining the United States from intervening in the European conflict. It might also lead to a peaceful settlement of the China incident. He wanted to keep both the United States and Japan out of the European arena and if possible exercise a joint mediation between Germany and Great Britain.

When Foreign Minister Matsuoka succeeded in concluding the neutrality pact with the Soviet Union in April, 1941, Konoye's diplomacy seemed off to a good start. We shall examine later the circumstances in which the pact with Russia was signed. But Konoye's hope for further success was dashed when soon afterward, in June, 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union. By this unexpected development, and to Konoye's intense mortification, the USSR suddenly changed sides from the Axis to the democratic camp. Konoye then grew apprehensive that Japan might be involved in the European war through our alliance with Germany. Becoming skeptical of the value of the Tripartite Pact, he began to pursue with redoubled energy the negotiations with the United

16. See Chap. VI.

States in order to reorientate our policy toward a closer association with that power.

Negotiations to that end had been commenced at Washington in April, 1941, by our ambassador, Admiral Nomura. These parleys aimed at a general agreement for the resumption of the traditional friendly relations between the two countries. The tentative plan submitted by the ambassador to the home government for approval ranged over a wide field. It covered the attitudes of both governments toward the European war, the settlement of the China affair, the recognition of Manchukuo or the Manchurian Empire, commercial and financial cooperation, political stabilization in the Pacific, and other military matters. The last mentioned included even a proposal for "the dispatch of a courtesy naval squadron, to visit the country of the other and signalize the new era of peace in the Pacific."

Logically there was small, if any, chance of success in the negotiation so long as Japan wanted to retain her alliance with Germany, since Hitler's relations with the United States were then rapidly deteriorating. Quite obviously President Roosevelt was determined to intervene in the European war and to rescue Great Britain from the dire plight in which she was at that time. As early as December, 1940, President Roosevelt stated in one of his fireside chats that "if Great Britain goes down the Axis powers will control Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the high seas. . . . It is no exaggeration to say that all of us in all the Americas would be living at the point of a gun—a gun loaded with explosive bullets, economic as well as military." ¹⁷

It was, however, impossible for us to abrogate the Axis alliance, which was only six months old, without reassuring ourselves as to the true intentions of the United States on many questions. Moreover, we could not possibly come to terms with the United States except by abandoning our policy of expansion on the continent, a policy which our Army had no intention of abandoning. When, therefore, Konoye wanted to offer new concessions to the Americans regarding the withdrawal of our troops from China, the Army, represented by the war minister, General Tojo, forced him out of office. Upon Konoye's resignation in October, 1941,

17. *New York Times* (December 6, 1940), p. 6.

Tojo¹⁸ was installed as prime minister; and under his dictatorial leadership preparations for war were pushed on, finally resulting in the fatal assault on Pearl Harbor.

It is nowadays the fashion in Japan to blame Matsuoka for the breakdown of the negotiations with the United States. This fashion has gained popularity since Konoye in his memoirs treated Matsuoka, then dead, as the villain of the piece. Granted that Matsuoka's behavior was sometimes difficult to understand, it is unfair, to say the least, to distort the facts regarding him.

Matsuoka was a genius, dynamic and erratic. His mind worked as swiftly as lightning. People were dazzled by his brilliance. He was eloquent and could plead a cause with passion. Many were impressed by the vigor of his utterances and were carried away by them. But he often contradicted himself. Consistency to him was, as to Emerson, "the hobgoblin of little minds." He despised conventions and swept them aside as if they were cobwebs. This created the misapprehension that he was a radical. In short, the personalities of Konoye and Matsuoka were poles apart. If Konoye was a shy squirrel sheltered in the deep forests, Matsuoka was the stormy petrel that delights to spread its wings over the foaming sea. It is doubtful if the two ever understood one another.

For all his love of ostentation, however, Matsuoka was not vain at heart. He was a devout Christian, to begin with, and died a converted Catholic. He was a man of rugged honesty and homeliness and possessed of a sterling sense of honor. He had spent his formative years from fourteen to thirty in the United States. To the end of his days—he died of consumption in June, 1946—he entertained a genuine affection for America.

When I returned home from England toward the end of 1940, I asked Matsuoka, then foreign minister, why it was that he, an avowed friend of America, had concluded the alliance with Germany. He replied that if he had appeared on the stage a few years earlier it would not have been difficult for him to establish an enduring cordial relationship with the United States. Unfortunately he came too late and there was no way left open but to

¹⁸ Gen. Hideki Tojo was arrested as a war criminal after the Allied occupation of Japan. He was tried and, on November 12, 1948, was convicted on seven counts of war guilt. Sentenced to death, he was hanged December 23, 1948. *New York Times* (December 23, 1948), p. 1. (Ed.)

cooperate with Germany in order to cope with the growing pressure from the democratic powers. He stressed again and again the fear that war between the United States and Japan would spell the downfall of mankind, and he urged the responsible statesmen of the two countries to exert themselves to avert such a calamity. Matsuoka wanted to use the Axis alliance as an instrument for restraining the United States from intervening in the European war. So he declared that Japan's foreign policy would revolve around the alliance as its pivot, as it had around the Anglo-Japanese alliance in the past. Unfortunately this did not bring about the desired object but on the contrary aggravated relations with the United States; the Americans took it as a veiled threat. Matsuoka did not mean to imply any threat. He believed that it was only by maintaining a firm attitude on Japan's part that the United States could be discouraged from participating in the European war, an event which he feared might involve Japan in the struggle. He even hoped eventually to mediate jointly with America for world peace.

While in Moscow, on April, 1941, on his way back from Europe, Matsuoka conversed freely with his old friend Mr. Steinhardt, the American ambassador. He told the ambassador about his visit to the Axis capitals and also of his negotiations with the Kremlin.¹⁹ He took the ambassador into his confidence and gave him detailed accounts—which he did not take the trouble to report to the home government. In the course of these conversations, in which the ambassador naturally took keen interest, Matsuoka deftly asked him to help in restoring better relations between Japan and the United States. He explained that the deterioration of those relations was mainly due to the deep involvement of the American government in the China situation, one which had been rendered difficult of solution because of international complications. If fighting in China ceased, the relations between Japan and the United States would at once improve. Therefore he asked whether, if Japan offered a just and equitable peace to Chiang Kai-shek, President Roosevelt would advise Chiang to negotiate with Japan and settle the conflict diplomatically. Chiang could be induced to accept such an offer if the president warned him that in case he refused it the United States would give China no further as-

19. See Chap. VI.

sistance. Steinhardt responded to this inquiry with alacrity. A résumé of these conversations was prepared for transmission to Washington before Matsuoka's departure from Moscow.

On April 21 Matsuoka arrived at Dairen where he intended to stay for one or two days. As he was resting at the residence of the president of the South Manchurian Railway the telephone rang. Konoye was at the other end, asking for him. An important proposal from Washington had been received a few days previously, and the cabinet was anxiously awaiting the return of the foreign minister. Would he fly home immediately? As he put down the receiver Matsuoka was beaming. The conversation with Steinhardt had borne fruit! After his return to Tokyo Matsuoka elatedly told me he would soon fly to the United States to complete his peace program. He had brought about a rapprochement with Russia. He would restore friendship with China. This would be followed by conciliation with the United States. Together Japan and America would bring peace back to Europe. Such was his dream!

This was by no means merely a fantasy. Before his departure for Europe Matsuoka had written to such friends as the late Thomas Lamont passionate pleas for the promotion of better understanding between Japan and America. At Rome he had received a message from our embassy in Washington that a specially chartered airplane was waiting for him at Lisbon to take him to America for a confidential meeting with the president. This had been arranged by Roy Howard, Matsuoka's intimate friend. At that juncture Matsuoka's mind was set upon Moscow where difficult negotiations were waiting him, and so he cabled back saying that he could not avail himself of the arrangement just yet.

To his amazement he discovered, on reaching Tokyo, that the American proposal mentioned by Konoye had originated in a series of "informal" conversation between two American Catholic priests and an ex-official of the Japanese Treasury Department whose integrity was rather dubious. The fact that such conversations had been inaugurated without the knowledge of the foreign minister added to the mystery. Matsuoka became skeptical and requested time for mature consideration. Konoye characteristically describes this is a piece of willful sabotage, but this I believe is a case of overstatement. Matsuoka keenly desired a rapprochement

with the United States. But fearing a possible false step at this moment, he advised Konoye to delay and thus was blamed, by Konoye at least, for the subsequent failure of our negotiations with the United States.

The turning point in the Tokyo-Washington parley was the decision of the imperial conference of September 6, 1941,²⁰ which was adopted in spite of the lively misgivings of the Emperor. This decision was proposed by the Supreme Command, and its main points were as follows:

1. We should generally perfect our preparation for war by the latter part of October, with the determination not to shrink from a war with the United States (as well as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands) in order to ensure our self-existence and self-defense.

2. Parallel with the above, we should try to obtain our demands through negotiations with the United States and Great Britain, exhausting all diplomatic means for this purpose.

3. We should determine to commence war at once on the United States (as well as on the United Kingdom and the Netherlands) in case by the beginning of October the negotiations should not have produced any prospect of an amicable settlement.

When this momentous decision was submitted to the Emperor but one day before the imperial conference he objected to the emphasis being on warlike preparations rather than on diplomatic efforts. Konoye assured the Emperor that it was the intention of the government to make the utmost efforts to seek a diplomatic settlement of the situation, and that preparations for war would be begun only in case the negotiations broke down. The Emperor, not satisfied with these assurances, summoned the chiefs of staff of the Army and Navy who offered the same explanation. Thereupon the Emperor permitted the summoning of the conference. At this conference Baron Hara, president of the Privy Council, questioned the government and the Supreme Command as to why warlike preparations took precedence over diplomatic negotiations. The navy minister replied for the government along the lines of Konoye's previous assurances, but the Supreme Command remained silent. Then the Emperor unexpectedly addressed the meeting. Baron Hara's question, he said, was timely and he thought

20. By this time Matsuoka had resigned.

it deplorable that the Supreme Command did not choose to reply. He took a piece of paper from his pocket and read aloud a poem composed by his grandfather, the Emperor Meiji:

When I regard all the world
As my own brothers
Why is it that its tranquillity
Should be so thoughtlessly disturbed?

He said that he had always cherished this poem, sharing as he did to the full the earnest solicitude of the great Emperor Meiji for enduring world peace.

All the participants were deeply moved. Amid the silence that ensued the naval chief of staff said that the Supreme Command was of the same mind as the government in giving diplomatic negotiations precedence over preparations for war.

This decision of the imperial conference was fatal in that a time limit was set to the negotiations. This decision was known only to a very few persons at that time. I myself was entirely ignorant of it. Long after the war started I asked Konoye why such a decision had been taken at that juncture. Konoye replied that when Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June, 1941, the Army manifested a considerable degree of uneasiness. He succeeded in preventing any hasty action but in return had to agree to the dispatch of troops to southern French Indochina in July. This step caused a grave shock to the American government, which lost no time in retaliating by freezing Japanese assets in the United States. This was tantamount to the severance of economic relations. The negotiations were also suspended. Singularly enough, it seems that neither our government nor the Supreme Command expected the United States to react in this way. Our fighting services thereupon began in earnest to prepare for the worst. As their preparations advanced they naturally lost interest in the negotiations, and it finally came to the point of deciding whether, and how long, to continue them.

Konoye's analysis of the situation was quite right. As a matter of fact an imperial conference had been held on July 2, 1941, to decide on our attitude toward the Russo-German war which had begun only ten days before. While a policy of nonintervention was adopted, it was simultaneously decided to pursue an active policy

toward Thailand and French Indochina with a view to expanding into the southern region, "even at the risk of an armed conflict with Great Britain and the United States." The conference adopted, among others, the following decision:

Japan will continue the disposition of the China incident, and will step up the southward advance in order to establish for herself a basis for self-existence and self-defense. The northern problems will be dealt with according to the changes in the situation.

Japan will remove all obstacles for the achievement of the foregoing purpose.

This was enlarged upon by the explanation:

For the sake of her self-existence and self-defense Japan will continue necessary diplomatic negotiations with the nations concerned in the southern regions and will also promote other necessary measures. For this purpose we shall make preparations for a war with Great Britain and the United States. First, we shall accomplish the execution of our schemes against French Indochina and Thailand . . . thereby stabilizing our structure for the southern advance.

This meant that the Army was allowed to advance southward instead of marching northward. Thanks to the neutrality pact it was set free for a while from the obsession of the traditional Russian menace. Since the northern rear was rendered safe it could direct its attention elsewhere. The Navy, which would have been left out in case of a war with the Soviet Union, could also play an important role in exploiting the South Seas regions. Thus the interests of the two services coincided and they embarked upon the southward march. The result was the advance into French Indochina on July 29.

Incidentally, Matsuoka was opposed to the "southern advance" on the ground that it would jeopardize relations with Great Britain and the United States. He thought it was wiser to concentrate attention on the north and remove the Russian menace once for all by joining the German attack upon the Soviet Union. Formerly president of the South Manchurian Railway, he was by conviction a "continentalist" who felt that Japan's destiny should be fulfilled on the Asiatic mainland. He took for granted that the ambitious Kwantung army fully shared his view but in this he was mistaken. Some observers maintained that Matsuoka urged a war on the

Soviet Union chiefly as an expedient to divert the attention of the Supreme Command from the southern region and prevent an armed conflict with the Anglo-Saxon powers. At any rate, Matsuoka, broken in health, had relinquished the duties of foreign minister before the Army advanced into southern French Indochina. The second Konoye cabinet resigned in a body on July 16 in order to oust Matsuoka who was regarded as an obstacle to the negotiations with America. Three days later the third Konoye cabinet was formed with Admiral Toyoda as foreign minister. But this sacrifice brought no reward since the southern advance seriously aggravated relations with the United States.

When the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands froze Japanese assets simultaneously on July 26, 1941, the Supreme Command was thoroughly alarmed. This meant economic isolation for Japan. She could now trade only with China, Manchuria, French Indochina, and Thailand. China, however, was a battlefield, while French Indochina and Thailand were doubtful regions, extremely susceptible to the increasing pressure of the United States and Great Britain. By coincidence it was on the same day, July 26, 1941, that the American government announced the establishment of military headquarters in Manila under General MacArthur.

After deliberations lasting over a month, the Supreme Command arrived at the decision that it was necessary to prepare for the eventuality of a war in case diplomatic efforts failed. Such preparations involved the mobilization of a large force, the requisition and equipment of at least 400,000 tons of merchant shipping and the deployment of more than 4,000,000 troops. The Supreme Command could not carry out such preparations on its own responsibility alone. It therefore forced the government to agree to the decision of September 6, 1941, which, as we have already seen, formally sanctioned the policy of preparing for war.

I was told later that if war became unavoidable the Supreme Command desired to commence hostilities as early as possible. Our oil stocks were rapidly dwindling. By the middle of 1942 the oil available for civilian consumption would be exhausted. This would cause a general paralysis of key industries. Within two years' time the Navy would also use up its stock of oil and the fleet and

air force would become totally immobilized. Moreover, as time went by, the United States was bound to achieve air superiority over Japan. The hostile encirclement would grow in strength as time passed.

The Supreme Command calculated, it seems, that the operations in the southern regions would require some five months. Should the beginning of the war be delayed beyond the spring of the following year, the menace from the Soviet Union would appreciably increase, as military operations in the north would become easier with the passing of winter. Besides, from the end of October to the end of February the monsoon would seriously hamper offensive operations in the South Seas. These were, I understand, the chief reasons which prompted the military to impose a time limit on the negotiations.

The negotiations came to a deadlock early in October when we received an oral statement from the United States, made on October 2, 1941. This was a reply to our proposal of September 6 for a meeting between Prince Konoye and President Roosevelt at Honolulu. Konoye had suggested this meeting in August in the hope that a personal talk with the president might result in a speedy solution of the lengthy negotiations. Ambassador Grew's cooperation was solicited. He welcomed the suggestion.²¹ The president also responded favorably at first, suggesting Juneau, Alaska, instead of Honolulu. But he later cooled off when the State Department insisted that before such a meeting there should be some agreement on the main points at issue. The meeting itself should then be limited to the ratification of what had been agreed upon.

As the negotiations made painfully slow progress, the Supreme Command became impatient and on September 25 requested the government to decide by October 15 on peace or war.

The oral statement mentioned above reached Tokyo about this time. It was highly disappointing, containing only the old familiar contentions of the American government. On October 12 Konoye summoned to his private residence to consider the situation the ministers of war (General Tojo), navy (Admiral Oyokawa), and foreign affairs (Admiral Toyoda), and the president of the Planning Board (General Suzuki). Before this gathering the navy

21. Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan* (Simon & Schuster, 1944), pp. 438-439.

minister confided to the prime minister that the Navy wanted to prevent a rupture of negotiations as it did not desire war, but that it could not state this explicitly because it had been a party to the decision of September 6. Hence the Navy wanted to leave to the prime minister the decision for peace or war. Considering that the Pacific War was largely a naval affair, this was a rather singular attitude to take.

It was the position the navy minister took at the meeting. And he added that a decision must no longer be delayed. If we were to rely on diplomacy we must stick to it to the very end. It would not do to try negotiations for a couple of months and then give them up; it would be too late then to fight. If war is inevitable, we should decide on war now as this would be the most propitious moment for us.

Konoye declared himself definitely in favor of continuing negotiations. War Minister Tojo objected, saying that it was foolish to pursue hopeless negotiations and thus miss an opportunity to strike. By protracting the negotiations, he said, the Americans were trying to gain time until they were ready to strike at us. Foreign Minister Toyoda reminded him that negotiations were not necessarily hopeless if the Army would make concessions in withdrawing the expeditionary forces from China. But Tojo dismissed this as altogether impossible. He said that if we should withdraw our Army from China in submission to pressure from the United States it would nullify the enormous sacrifices we had made during four years of fighting. In addition China would regard it as weakness on our part and would resort to provocations which would again necessitate our armed intervention on the continent. Konoye asked Tojo in vain to reconsider the matter and the conference broke up after four hours' heated discussion.

Two days later, at the cabinet meeting on October 14, Tojo categorically demanded abandonment of the negotiations without further ado. Precisely at this juncture the Army approached Konoye secretly, saying that if the Navy still honestly did not desire war and stated so explicitly without mincing words, the Army would have to reconsider its position. Although the prime minister's decision could not suffice to reverse the policy which had been solemnly agreed upon, if the Navy officially declared its opposition to the war the Army might yet be able to control

the extremist groups clamoring for war. Could not the Navy be brought to make such a declaration?

Konoye immediately sounded out the Navy, but the latter refused to comply with the request. The most it would do was to propose leaving the decision to the prime minister. While such activities were going on behind the scenes Tojo abruptly sent Konoye a message to the effect that though the Navy did not say so openly it apparently recoiled from war. Hence the decision of September 6 had become untenable and it would be best for the cabinet to resign in a body, taking responsibility for that decision. A new cabinet headed by an imperial prince (Prince Higashikuni) seemed to be desirable at this point in order to nullify the decision of September 6 and to allow the choice of a new policy. Thus it was that Konoye was ousted from office.

Of all the decisions made before the war, that of September 6 was the worst. Konoye cannot be absolved of responsibility in recommending it to the throne, for he should have been fully aware of what was implied by such a momentous step. He had little liking for the decision. He should have resisted the military with more vigor and resigned then and there if his views were overruled. Instead he temporized, trusting to luck.

Some years later Konoye told me with bitterness that at no time did he feel so exasperated as when the Navy took this impossible attitude. If it had but declared its opposition to war it would have saved the peace! But it would not do so. The truth was that there was very keen rivalry and little mutual trust between the two fighting services. The Army was the senior of the two, and the Navy was afraid of encroachment upon its prerogatives if it showed any sign of weakness. This was most unfortunate. There are those who feel that the Navy was a past master in the art of equivocation and that a morbid concern to preserve its face often made it unreliable at critical junctures. This peculiar trait was common to both services but it was, they say, more pronounced in the case of the Navy. It made it very difficult later for us to work for the termination of hostilities.

Tojo feared that the Supreme Command might object to the cancellation of the decision of September 6. In such an eventuality, he thought that only the prestige of an imperial prince as prime minister could meet the difficult situation. However, Kido, lord

privy seal, did not agree. Kido thought it unwise to involve an imperial prince in politics at a time when peace and war hung in the balance. It might jeopardize the security of the imperial house. An imperial prince might head a cabinet only when the two services were united in pursuing a policy of peace.

It was Kido's duty as lord privy seal to advise the throne on important affairs of state.²² He was the trusted confidant of the Emperor and as such his position was unique. Whenever a cabinet change took place the Emperor entrusted Kido with the task of recommending a new prime minister. Kido in turn consulted the jushin (senior statesmen) or former prime ministers. Accordingly a jushin conference was held on the afternoon of October 17 at the imperial palace. Eight jushin took part,²³ together with Baron Hara, president of the Privy Council. The conference deliberated for two and a half hours and, largely through Kido's advice, chose Tojo. Kido reasoned that Tojo was not necessarily determined on war and that he would be better qualified than others to control the Army. If, therefore, the Emperor nullified the decision of September 6 which, it would seem, had been carelessly made, and specifically commanded the two services to work in closer cooperation, Tojo would yet be able to avert war. This belief proved to be disastrously wrong, but at that time most senior statesmen accepted it. There were, however, a few exceptions: Baron Wakatsuki, who opposed any notion of resorting to war, suggested General Ugaki. Admiral Okada, equally anxious for peace, was critical of Tojo because he had brought down the Konoye cabinet by refusing to compromise. He asked Kido: "You often said that the Army sniped at you with a rifle from behind. What if the Army shot you in the back with a cannon?"

Kido, who plays an important role in the succeeding narrative,

22. Marquis Koichi Kido was arrested as a war criminal December 6, 1945, after the Allied occupation of Japan, and on November 12, 1948, was sentenced to life imprisonment on five counts of war guilt. *New York Times* (November 12, 1948), p. 1. (Ed.)

23. Baron Wakatsuki, Admiral Okada, Baron Hiranuma, Viscount Kiyoura, Admiral Yonai, General Abe, General Hayashi, and Mr. Hirota.

Formerly Prince Saionji, the surviving genro (elder statesman) from the Meiji Restoration, alone used to recommend the succeeding prime minister, but as he advanced in age he requested the lord privy seal, then Count Makino, to seek the views not only of the genro but also of the jushin. After Saionji's death in November, 1944, the custom was established of the lord privy seal's inviting the opinion of the senior statesmen assembled in conference.

is a grandson of Marquis Kido (Koin), one of the three prominent leaders, commonly known as the "big three," of the Meiji Restoration. In 1930 he was made private secretary to Count Makino, lord privy seal. He occupied that post for ten years, until in May, 1940, he was appointed lord privy seal on the recommendation of the late Prince Saionji, who was then the only elder statesman surviving from the Meiji Restoration.

Prince Saionji was a very liberal statesman. He hailed from a distinguished house—that of an ancient court noble. Born in 1849, he was a child of four when Commodore Perry's black ships struck terror into the heart of Japan. After playing an active part in the work of the Restoration he went abroad in 1867 and remained ten years in Europe. Most of this time he spent in Paris where he saw the uprising of the Commune. He studied law under Émile Acoras and cultivated the friendship of such men as Clemenceau and Gambetta. When he returned home, a young man of thirty-three, imbued with radical republican principles, he shocked his conservative friends by starting a liberal newspaper in which he openly criticized the autocratic government of the day. Pressure was brought to bear upon him but he would not yield to it. He gave up the newspaper only at imperial command, which no doubt had been engineered by the harassed government leaders.

Later, he became president of the Seiyukai party, one of the two major political parties, and three times served as prime minister. He attended the Versailles Peace Conference as chief delegate. Until his death in November, 1940, he exerted a tremendous influence on the destiny of the nation. It was he who recommended prime ministers whenever cabinet changes took place. Politicians vied with each other in courting the favor of the elder statesman whose recognition was the surest passport to the premiership. Yet he never abused his power, but exercised it wisely on behalf of peace and liberty. He was in a sense a personification of liberty. It was his firm belief that Japan could prosper only through harmonious cooperation with the democratic powers, and in particular with Great Britain and the United States. He always emphasized the necessity of assimilating democratic culture and his favorite theme of conversation was "Japan in the world." This was the title under which he once published a periodical influential with men of liberal thought. In his later years I sometimes assisted him

in correspondence with foreign dignitaries and I know that to his last day he remained a staunch liberal. It was perhaps fortunate for him that death spared him the ordeal of a war with the democratic powers. Count Makino, Prince Konoye, and Marquis Kido all were disciples of this grand old man and each in his own way tried to carry out the lessons learned from him.

At one time, however, Prince Saionji seemed to incline toward a slight distrust of Kido on the suspicion that the lord privy seal, actuated perhaps by some personal ambition, was veering toward the right. There is a passage or two in the diaries of the late Baron Harada, for many years private secretary to Prince Saionji, which bears out this suspicion. It is also interesting to note that Konoye's entourage was at one time rather critical of Kido, allegedly because he cultivated the good will of the military in order to advance his political fortunes. The truth is that Kido perhaps sometimes chose to swim with the current in order to insure tranquillity in an extremely unstable political situation.

When Tojo was summoned to the imperial presence on the afternoon of October 17, 1941, he did not know that he was to be entrusted with the formation of a cabinet. He received the imperial command with surprise. The Emperor specifically instructed him to disregard the decision of September 6 and reshape the national policy after carefully considering the situation prevailing at home and abroad. Tojo retained the War Office so as to be able to exert influence on the Army. He received the Emperor's command to ensure the cooperation of the two fighting services, as did Admiral Oikawa, the minister of the navy.

7

On the night of October 17 General Tojo sent for Togo and offered him the Foreign Office. Togo, in turn, sent for me. I had known him ever since I served with him at our embassy in Washington years before, and on such an occasion as this he usually wanted my help. So I hurried to his residence. Togo told me of his interview with the new prime minister. He said he had told Tojo he would accept the offer only on condition that the new cabinet would do its utmost toward bringing about a successful conclusion of the Tokyo-Washington negotiations. In reply,

Tojo explained the deep desire of the Emperor for peace and told of the imperial command he had received on his appointment as prime minister. He assured Togo that he would explore every possibility of amicable settlement. Finally convinced as to the intentions of the prime minister, Togo accepted the proffered portfolio. The next day, October 18, the Tojo cabinet took office.

With mixed feelings I congratulated Togo on his appointment, for I did not conceal from him my apprehension and pessimism regarding the possible outcome of the negotiations. Togo was at this time enjoying a life of leisure in retirement, having been relieved lately of ambassadorial duties upon his return from Moscow. During the time of his retirement he had no access to the top-secret files in the Foreign Office. He was therefore largely uninformed of the trend of the Japanese-American negotiations which had dragged on since April, 1941. He asked me to prepare a short summary of them. The next day, a Sunday, I spent more than ten hours reading the thick files which contained some 1,500 telegrams. I borrowed the files secretly from the code chief. When he read my summary Togo said with obvious dismay that he had not expected to find the negotiations in such a hopeless muddle. He was like a physician who after having undertaken the treatment of a new case discovers that it is a nearly hopeless one. I thought Togo almost regretted his appointment as foreign minister. But it was now too late . . .

The negotiations were indeed hopelessly muddled. It was singular, to say the least, that during the critical period from July to October, 1941, neither the Foreign Office nor the embassy in Washington understood the real issue clearly. They believed that the withdrawal of our armed forces from China constituted the main—and almost the sole—point of disagreement. That is why Tojo could wreck the Konoye cabinet by refusing to consider such withdrawal. Actually the crucial issues, as I have indicated elsewhere, were our alliance with Germany and the pursuit of our expansionist policy, one and the same thing in the mind of the American government. As our government missed this point, the conduct of negotiations was bound to be futile and in several months' time much irreparable harm had been done.

At first Tojo seemed to show sufficient interest in the negotiations. I believe he was sincere. When he combined the portfolio

of the home minister with those which he held already, he said it was in order to cope with possible disturbances that might ensue upon the successful culmination of the negotiations. Even an astute observer like Ambassador Grew wrote:

Despite the fact that, as anticipated, the Konoye Government was succeeded not by a civilian but by a military man, indications of a willingness on the part of the Tojo Government to proceed with the conversations . . . would imply that it is premature to stigmatize the Tojo Government as a military dictatorship committed to the furtherance of policies which might be expected to bring about armed conflict with the United States.

It is important to note that General Tojo, as distinguished from previous Japanese military Prime Ministers, is not a retired officer but is a full general in the active service. Thus the Japanese Army for the first time in recent years has openly assumed responsibility for the policies and conduct of government in Japan, which it had previously steadfastly declined to accept. It would be logical, therefore, to expect that General Tojo, in retaining his active rank in the Army, will as a result be in a position to exercise a larger degree of control over Army extremist groups.²⁴

But this did not last long. The Supreme Command began to harass the government. It was ready to strike and if it did not strike in time it would soon become unable to do so. It was, it said, a choice of now or never.

Between October 23 and November 2 a liaison conference between the government and the Supreme Command was held in order to conduct a searching analysis of the situation at home and abroad. This was a necessary preliminary to shaping the fundamental policy of the new cabinet toward the negotiations with the United States. The Foreign Office tried hard to obtain the maximum concessions from the Army in order to facilitate the negotiations. The American Bureau of the Foreign Office which was in charge of the negotiations then consisted largely of persons who had been educated in, and had real affection for, the United States. It was natural that they should have desired success in the negotiations. They submitted a dispassionate analysis of the situation in Europe, deprecating the idea, which was then popular, that Germany would win the war. They listed the formidable resources of

24. *Ten Years in Japan*, p. 460.

the democratic powers, especially the United States, and cited the indomitable spirit of the British people. They argued that the United States would probably sooner or later intervene in the European conflict, and that it would therefore be to our interest to remain neutral and nurture our strength, settling our difficulties with China through negotiations. These appeals to reason were, however, unheeded.

Since I entered the Foreign Service some twenty years ago it has always been my desire to strengthen friendship between the United States and Japan. I received my college education in the United States and am proud of it. I have considered it a privilege and have felt that I owed an obligation to make some return for it. I have therefore applied myself to the promotion of better understanding between Japan and America. With the years this task has become a sort of self-appointed mission. I therefore tried my best to help expedite the amicable settlement of the negotiations. As I knew Mr. Grew, the American ambassador, intimately, I called upon him often and we worked together for our common objective—peace in the Pacific. I have great admiration and sincere affection for the ambassador and enjoyed our collaboration most heartily. Time and again he let me read in the original important dispatches he had received from the State Department. That was a mark of confidence and I was grateful for it. He even said once that he welcomed me as an official with whom he could collaborate fully and freely. I deeply appreciated that remark. However our collaboration was too late to achieve its purpose.

At the same time I tried to arouse the active interest of the British government in the negotiations which, after all, materially affected the British Empire. As the negotiations stagnated, I thought it advisable to ask the British government to intervene. While Washington was often obdurate, London was usually more elastic and capable of wider accommodation, an attitude which more than once had solved a seemingly impossible situation in the past. I was then fresh from London where I had stayed four years, up to the latter part of 1940. I had made many friends there and my association with them convinced me that there was yet room for a rapprochement between Tokyo and London. In fact I was more than ever convinced that the triangular collaboration of Japan, Great Britain, and the United States, the three major naval powers,

was the key to the establishment of an enduring peace. Sir Robert Craigie, the able British ambassador to Japan, for whom I have an abiding admiration, readily concurred in my view, and we tried to awaken the British government to the situation. However his plea that his government take an active part in the negotiations unexpectedly met a sharp rebuff. Sir Robert was rather bluntly told to keep silence, since the negotiations were in the best hands, those of the United States, which knew what was best to do. This was most unfortunate. If the British government had played a more active role in the negotiations, the outcome might have been quite different.

All this while the Supreme Command had been actively preparing for the war. I learned later that when the momentous decision of September 6 was made the Supreme Command held that it would take about two months to complete these preparations. Accordingly, all should have been ready by early November.

On November 2, 1941, the liaison conference of the government and the Supreme Command sat until the small hours of the morning. There were three plans to choose from: a) to continue the negotiations and in case they should break down to mark time in peace; b) to break off the negotiations, commencing hostilities at once; c) to pursue the negotiations on the one hand and prepare for the worst on the other. The conference adopted the third plan. It agreed upon a new formula for the guidance of the negotiations which contained a few new concessions on the part of the Army. On the other hand it affirmed the policy of resorting to war when and if all peaceful means had failed. All preparations for war were to be completed by early December. There was, however, a proviso to the effect that if the negotiations should succeed preparations for war should be called off at once. When Tojo and the two chiefs of staff jointly reported this decision to the throne in the afternoon of November 2 the Emperor was gravely concerned. He requested them to redouble their efforts for the success of the negotiations.

On November 5 the decision was formally approved at the imperial conference. The foreign minister may well have been informed of the military part of this decision, but I heard nothing of it at that time. In fact I learned of it only many months after the outbreak of the war. Such being the policy of the Supreme Command, there was little, if any, prospect of a successful con-

clusion of the negotiations. For it was now a race against time, and time quickly ran out.

It is my impression that there was very little that Togo could have done to change the course of events. After all, he had been in office barely forty days when on December 1 the imperial conference finally decided on war. I helped him as much as I could in his efforts to preserve peace, but I had nothing to do with the final decision which was exclusively in the hands of the government-Supreme Command liaison conference. Thus I cannot pretend to know of everything that entered into the making of the ultimate policy. But it would seem to have been humanly impossible for Togo alone to repair the desperate situation—or for anybody, for that matter. By the time Togo became foreign minister the situation had gone too far; and as usual the fighting services did not take the Foreign Office into their confidence but kept vital decisions secret from it.

As a matter of fact the decision of September 6, though officially nullified, remained substantially intact. Togo was largely ignorant of the past discussions and arguments, and that placed him at a heavy disadvantage with his colleagues in the cabinet—the war minister, for example. Moreover the situation was tense and time was short, making it practically impossible to review the whole question anew without reference to the September decision.

When the imperial conference decided on war I felt so disillusioned that I decided to send in my resignation. I could not bear the thought of an armed struggle with the United States and Great Britain, two countries I loved most. But I was told that under the circumstances my resignation could not be accepted. And within a week the Pacific war had begun.

8

Could anyone have turned the tide and preserved the peace at the last moment? Kido, lord privy seal, says that he was hoping to ask the Emperor to intervene on behalf of peace but that the American proposal of November 26, 1941, made it impossible. This was the so-called Hull note, received in Tokyo on November 28. It asked the Japanese government to agree to take ten steps including

1. Withdrawal of all military, air, and police forces from China and Indochina.
2. Withdrawal of support—military, political, and economic—to any government or regime in China other than Chiang Kai-shek's government.
3. Virtual nullification of the Tripartite Pact.
4. Conclusion of a multilateral nonaggression pact among the seven powers, namely, the British Empire, China, Japan, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, Thailand, and the United States.

It was surprising that such a proposal should have been abruptly made at this critical juncture, for it was an unexpected departure from the formula which had become familiar to both governments through the several months of the negotiations. The American government seemed to have suddenly decided to discard all the results of the negotiations up to that point. This note definitely killed any hope of speedily attaining a diplomatic solution. Our leaders were shocked and decided that further negotiations would serve no useful purpose. The American note thus played into the hands of the military who were itching for battle. They regarded it as an ultimatum presented to Japan in the full expectation that it would not be accepted. Therefore they concluded that America was apparently determined on war. In fact, she might even take an offensive. They jeered at the lack of foresight of the Foreign Office in persisting in negotiations. As ever, the Foreign Office was to blame. The Hull note was used to stampede the nation into war.

We now know that from about November 20 the American government was in frequent consultation with the other powers interested in the Far Eastern question. On November 25 Knox, Stimson, and Hull agreed on offering Japan a three months' truce, but this idea was abandoned due to the violent opposition of China. When the note of November 26 was dispatched instead, Hull is reported to have told Stimson that he had "washed his hands of it [the negotiation] and it is now in the hands of you and Knox—the Army and the Navy."²⁵ Hull also told the British ambassador, on November 29, that "the diplomatic part of our relations with Japan was virtually over and that the matter will now go to the

25. George Morgenstern, *Pearl Harbor* (Devin-Adair Company, 1947), p. 156.

officials of the Army and Navy.”²⁶ President Roosevelt, too, made a statement which implied that he anticipated an immediate Japanese attack.

These facts alone show clearly that the American government abandoned the negotiations when it sent us the note in question. Indeed, more probably, the truth is that the United States had given up the negotiations even before November 26. It is said that General Marshall, army chief of staff, and Admiral Stark, chief of naval operations, on November 5 and again on November 27 sent joint memoranda to the president urging that no ultimatum be sent to Japan and stressing the need for time in order to perfect preparations for war. At least one American writer claims that President Roosevelt tried to force the Japanese Supreme Command to strike the first blow so that American public opinion would support a war with the Axis powers.²⁷ And in *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War 1941* the late Professor Beard quotes Stimson's diary: “The question was how we should maneuver them [the Japanese] into the position of firing the first shot. . . . It was a difficult proposition.”²⁸

Some months after the outbreak of the war I called upon Sir Robert Craigie at the British embassy. The ambassador was busily engaged in writing what he called his version of the “failure of a mission.” He asked me why it was that Togo did not tell him war had already begun when he called upon the foreign minister at 8 A.M. on December 8. “I must have looked a complete fool,” said the ambassador with some bitterness. I was very fond of Sir Robert and regretted his mortification. I replied that it was probably because the foreign minister assumed the ambassador had heard the radio announce the war at seven o'clock. Sir Robert laughed and said, “My friend, you don't expect an Englishman to turn on the radio at seven o'clock on a Sunday morning.”

Then he told me that he learned the contents of the Hull note only after the war had started. He was considerably surprised. The note contained extraordinary terms. Anybody who understood the mentality of the Japanese people would have known that

26. *Peace and War; United States Foreign Policy 1931-1941* (U. S. Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 144.

27. Morgenstern, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-285.

28. C. A. Beard, *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War 1941* (Yale University Press, 1948), p. 517.

such a proposal presented in such a manner at such a moment would deeply injure their susceptibilities and might cause the breakdown of the negotiations. He deplored anew the misfortune that the British government had not used its good offices at that critical juncture. I admired Sir Robert's courage in stating frankly what he felt, even if only for my own ears.

Incidentally Sir Robert is not alone in criticizing the Hull note. Charles Beards asks:

Is this the foreign policy, the official program of the United States for the Far East, in support of which Americans are to pour out blood and treasure? . . . At no time in the history of American diplomatic relations with the Orient, if published records are to be trusted, had the Government of the United States proposed to Japan such a sweeping withdrawal from China under the veiled threat of war and under the pressure of economic sanctions likely to lead to war.²⁹

Events at the end of November caused the Emperor to become anxious. On the 26th he sent for Kido and expressed grave concern. He directed the latter to arrange for a gathering of the jushin. On November 29 eight jushin met at the palace: Baron Wakatsuki, Prince Konoye, Admiral Okada, Baron Hiranuma, Admiral Yonai, General Abe, General Hayashi, and Hirota. Together with Baron Hara, president of the Privy Council, they received an analysis of the situation from Tojo, Togo, and other ministers, which lasted from 9:30 A.M. to 1 P.M. Then they were entertained by the Emperor at luncheon. In the afternoon they were invited to state their views individually to the Emperor. Most of the jushin desired peace and advised moderation. Baron Wakatsuki said he was not at all sure the country could bear the burden of a long war. If it was really a war of self-defense it might be necessary to fight even when we could predict a defeat; but to resort to war in order to fulfill such a grandiose dream as the establishment of "a common prosperity sphere in Greater East Asia" would be simply inviting disaster. Admiral Okada was highly skeptical as to whether we could ensure an adequate supply of war materials. Prince Konoye regretted the seeming hopelessness of the negotiations but considered that it was not necessary to rush into war simply because the negotiations collapsed. It would be far wiser to persevere in peace and to mark time, waiting for a better opportunity to

29. *Op. cit.*, pp. 235-236.

settle the pending questions amicably. Yonai and Hirota also seriously doubted the wisdom of resorting to war. Only Abe and Hayashi, two generals, observed that since the government had done its utmost war was perhaps the sole course left open. Hiranuma approved the war but warned the government of the necessity of sustaining public morale.

Thus the jushin were overwhelmingly in favor of peace, but their opinions did not influence the course of events. For jushin, unlike the elder statesmen of the Meiji era, were without any official status whatever. They could not enforce their views. The government was under no obligation to heed them. The title of jushin was an honorary one without any connotations in power. The political opinions of the elder statesmen were not necessarily more influential than were those of a man in the street, in spite of their greater moral prestige. To General Tojo the remonstrances of the jushin meant nothing, and as was expected he brushed them aside without hesitation.

One last desperate effort for peace was made by Prince Takamatsu, the younger brother of the Emperor and a naval officer. On November 30 he requested an audience of the Emperor and told him that resort to force should be avoided since the Navy was not really prepared for a war with America. But this appeal could not halt the war. The minister of the navy and the naval chief of staff hastened to the throne with assurances of the Navy's readiness. As a matter of fact the combined fleet had left Hitokappu Bay on November 26—for Pearl Harbor. Except for a very few in the fighting services no one knew of it.

On December 1 the imperial conference, as already stated, finally decided on war with the United States, Great Britain, and the Netherlands.

On the eve of the war with Germany in August, 1914, Sir Edward Grey, the British foreign secretary, stood at a window in his room in the Foreign Office and looking at lamps being lit in the square below remarked: "The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit in our life-time."³⁰ The lamps were going out now in Asia and we did not know when they would be lit again . . .

³⁰. Sir Edward Grey, *Twenty-five Years* (Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1925), II, 20.

III

A Tragic Interlude

I

WHEN TOJO commenced the war against the United States and Great Britain, he was staking upon it the fate of the nation. The die was cast with the attack upon Pearl Harbor.

For the first six months, up to the early summer of 1942, Japan enjoyed a series of easy conquests. She had occupied an immense territory and controlled a vast expanse of water in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. Her armies were standing at the threshold of India. They were still marching on steadily in China, and in the South Seas regions were extending conquests to which there seemed to be no limit. However, the momentum of the initial assault was slowed down by naval defeats in the Coral Sea and off Midway Island.

The United States was at first largely on the defensive, but by the summer of 1942 she could resort to the offensive when she chose to do so. This phase of mixed defensive and offensive strategy continued until the American forces landed on Guadalcanal in August, 1942, when a new phase of offensive-defensive war began. A bitter six-month struggle developed between the contending armies, both of which were supported by powerful navies. No fewer than six major sea battles were fought in the waters around Guadalcanal. Our Navy, which at first enjoyed supremacy, lost control of the adjacent seas by the end of November.

President Roosevelt cabled to Stalin: "We have gained, I believe, a toehold in the Southwest Pacific from which the Japanese will find it very difficult to dislodge us." At this time Stalin was repeating his desperate demand for the second front in Europe which the Allies could not yet organize. For the United States the Solomon Islands became the active front.¹

In order to reinforce the island garrison Japanese General Head-

1. Robert C. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* (Harper & Brothers, 1948), p. 622.

quarters decided in November to requisition 400,000 tons of the shipping reserved for civilian use. It was then the settled policy of the Supreme Command to hold Guadalcanal at any cost. But we found it impossible to do so. In early February, 1943, however, this policy was reversed and the surviving part of the garrison was withdrawn. This decision was taken only after heated and acrimonious discussions among the staff officers at GHQ in Tokyo. General Tanaka, chief of military operations, insisted on defending the island, and as a result was dismissed by Tojo.

This was the first grave setback suffered by the Army. Yet GHQ refused to admit the defeat and on February 10 described the withdrawal as *tenshin*, a newly coined word literally meaning "to march elsewhere." Thus the use of the much simpler and more accurate word "retreat" was avoided.

Apparently the defense of the island entailed too much sacrifice. We lost heavily in ships by this costly campaign. While we had lost some 1,156,000 gross tons during the fiscal year 1942 (April, 1942–March, 1943),² the monthly average of loss was much less during the first half-year than in the second. In spite of frantic efforts by the government, the loss of shipping far exceeded new construction, which failed to achieve even half of the volume planned. In January, 1943, approximately ten times as much tonnage was sunk as was replaced by new building.³ The shipping situation was indeed desperate. In order to meet the emergency a fleet of wooden ships was hurriedly constructed but at a cost per ton considerably higher than that of steel ships. Moreover these wooden ships were extremely vulnerable, partly on account of their slowness. They required two months or more for a voyage from Japan to Singapore.

In May the shipping available for civilian use dwindled to 1,250,000 tons, an amount totally inadequate for the maintenance of the national economy. As a result the standard of living of the people deteriorated rapidly. Many nonmilitary industries were deprived of fuel and raw materials and were forced to suspend operations. Factories producing consumer goods such as textiles, paper, soap, matches, etc., were either turned into munition plants

2. USSBS, *Japanese Merchant Shipping* (U. S. Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 18, Table 3. (Ed.)

3. USSBS, *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on Japan's War Economy* (U. S. Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 178, Table C-99; p. 181, Table C-102. (Ed.)

or pulled down to provide much-needed scrap iron. Stores selling nonessential articles such as stationery, books, toys were among the first to be closed. Badly needed manpower was also secured in this way. Consumer goods became scarce and prices soared. Taxes also rose. In March new taxes were imposed, amounting to 90 per cent on theater admissions, and 50 per cent on sales of food and drinks. Soon all restaurants were forced out of business. The people were beginning to taste the bitter fruits of war only fifteen months after the opening of hostilities with the United States and Britain.

On January 31, 1943, the German Army numbering 250,000 under General Von Paulus had surrendered to the Red Army at Stalingrad. Eight hundred thousand German troops had reached the outer wall of the city in August, 1942, and bloody battles were fought for the possession of this famous citadel on the Volga. The Soviet film *Stalingrad* shows how heroically and tenaciously the Red Army, 1,000,000 strong, fought to save this key city. It is worth remembering also that the forces of von Paulus capitulated only after fighting valiantly in an unaccustomed temperature of 35° below zero. Stalingrad was the first serious defeat sustained by Hitler. It was in fact the first clear indication that in Europe the change of tide had set in. It was a strange coincidence that our defeat at Guadalcanal and that of the Germans at Stalingrad should have occurred at about the same time.

When the news of Stalingrad reached Tokyo we held a conference in the Foreign Office to study the European situation. The majority thought that:

1. The German spring offensive would not succeed.
2. Relatively speaking, the power of the Axis (Germany and Italy) would gradually decline while the combined strength of the Allies (the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States) would rise.
3. Therefore there was little chance of victory for Germany.
4. There was hardly any probability of a compromise peace between Germany and Russia or between Germany and England.
5. Consequently Japan must reorient her policy before Germany collapsed.

In sharp contrast to this general pessimism, the Army held

optimistic views. Army men predicted that a stalemate would develop in the Russo-German struggle. This would prolong the European war and give Japan time to fortify the occupied regions so as to make her defense impregnable. In the meantime Britain and America would suffer heavy shipping losses and fall prey to war weariness. The Planning Board, always eager to please the Army, encouraged this wishful thinking by offering assurances that by the end of the year our shipping situation would improve. They promised a net increase of some 100,000 tons over what we possessed at the beginning of the year. However, few intelligent persons believed such a forecast.

Those who, like Prince Konoye, had been opposed to the war, began to express pessimistic views as early as February, 1943. The prince invited Marquis Kido, lord keeper of the privy seal, to see him and stressed the necessity of ending the war. He claimed that if it went on indefinitely the menace of communism would increase and social stability at home would be endangered. Fear of communism was always uppermost in Konoye's mind; it was almost an obsession. Kido agreed with him, and the two pledged their cooperation in seeking an early peace. On March 30 Kido reported to the Emperor the gist of his conversation with Konoye. The Emperor was then very anxious about the German situation and told Kido that he deemed it essential to end the war without a moment's delay.

Feeling his position insecure, Tojo tried to improve it by reconstructing his cabinet in the latter part of April, 1943. Ambassador Shigemitsu was summoned home from China to become foreign minister. The choice fell on him largely because of his alleged acceptability to the democratic powers. He was popular in England where he had effectively served as ambassador beginning in 1938. In fact, the Allied broadcasts hinted that his appointment might indicate the emergence of peace sentiment in Japan. Shigemitsu was also considered an expert on Soviet affairs, having served as ambassador in Moscow in 1936. He is a man of confirmed liberal views, consistently opposed to any policy of aggression and aggrandizement. Firmly convinced that the triangular cooperation of the major naval powers was the key to world peace, he unswervingly supported the policy of friendly collaboration with

England and America. I had the good fortune of serving under him in London. I was greatly impressed by his ability and became deeply attached to him.

On assuming his duties as foreign minister Shigemitsu began immediately to work for the return of peace. As soon as he returned home from the palace after receiving the imperial appointment he sent for me and we two worked out in utmost secrecy a broad plan calculated to reorient our foreign policy from war to peace. He began with the so-called New China Policy, aimed at the peaceful settlement of our conflict with Chiang Kai-shek. This policy asserted the principles of political equality and economic reciprocity. Shigemitsu wanted also to extend it to other countries of Asia.

In June he made a brilliant speech in the Diet where he announced this basic policy to a packed house. The main theme of his address was liberty—a word which had been taboo in Japan since Pearl Harbor. Shigemitsu, so to speak, rekindled the torch of liberty; and the nation, long accustomed to darkness, now gradually came into the light. This policy was embodied in November, 1943, in the Joint Declaration of Greater East Asiatic Nations. This Joint Declaration was hailed as the charter of a new Asia which would usher in a regime of justice and equity. But only a few understood its true implications, in that it ultimately aimed at a revolutionary change of policy both at home and abroad. For with the proclamation of an enlightened policy for other countries of Asia it was natural that our own people should wonder at the injustices prevailing in their own country. As a matter of fact Shigemitsu exerted a strong and subtle influence on the course of events, both internally and externally. At home his policy considerably weakened the power of the military, who no longer could afford to disregard the Foreign Office. Abroad it crystallized the common aspirations of the Asiatic nations which consequently refused to remain any longer "the white man's burden."

Kido writes in his affidavit submitted to the International Military Tribunal in Tokyo: "I found for the first time a partner to talk to about my peace moves in the person of Mr. Shigemitsu, one of my trusted friends, who was now offered the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. From then up to Japan's surrender I worked in

close teamwork with Mr. Shigemitsu for the termination of the war.”⁴ However, Shigemitsu was the prime mover in these peace moves. It was he who awakened the lord privy seal and other statesmen, including the jushin, to the urgency of the situation. In baseball jargon Shigemitsu was the pitcher and Kido the catcher.

Shigemitsu often sought audience with the Emperor to inform him of current international developments. I have reason to believe that these lectures had far-reaching effects in molding the Emperor's thoughts. At the same time Shigemitsu and I tried to convert influential persons to the cause of peace—cabinet ministers, privy councilors, leaders in both houses of the Diet, bankers and businessmen, scholars and journalists, and, last of all, officers at GHQ. This was a difficult and delicate task which required consummate tact and the utmost caution. It is only fair to say that during his two years as foreign minister Shigemitsu had more success in paving the way to an early peace than could have been secured by anyone else. By common consent he was perhaps the most farsighted foreign minister Japan has ever had.

Together with Shigemitsu, two veteran political leaders, Oasa and Yamazaki, were invited by Tojo to join the remodeled cabinet. This was an unmistakable sign that Tojo had become aware of the decline of his prestige. Otherwise he would not have stooped to cultivate parliamentarians whom he little trusted and inwardly despised. Politicians like Oasa, being more or less liberal minded, constituted a force essentially hostile to the military.

In the middle of May, 1943, Kido called on Prince Takamatsu, the Emperor's younger brother, and told him that in the event of the initiation of peace moves the prince would be requested to do his utmost to restrain the fighting services whose demands would not easily harmonize with the peace terms of the Allied powers. It was Kido's idea that only a prince of the imperial blood would be able to control the situation in such a contingency.

As time went on, American offensives were launched with increasing vigor. Many of our outposts fell after putting up valiant, though vain, resistance. Our isolated garrison on the island of Attu, so it was reported, all perished in the final banzai attacks on May 30, 1943. This episode was effectively exploited as a morale builder; but as island after island fell to overwhelming hostile assaults,

4. Source unavailable. (Ed.)

people naturally grew sick of the repeated and meaningless bloody sacrifices. In the case of Attu poor visibility prevented our air-planes from even locating the island. American planes nevertheless attacked it freely and incessantly. Such, indeed, was our backwardness in applied science. In still other remote battle areas the enemy often held command of the air for twenty-three out of twenty-four hours, our local air force being able to muster just enough strength to dominate the sky for one brief hour each day. Even that one hour was becoming doubtful. With naval and air supremacy in the hands of the enemy, there was no way of relieving or rescuing these forlorn garrisons, which had to be abandoned to their fate.

The fall of Attu was preceded by the conclusion of the North African campaign, announced on May 13. This marked a turning point in the war. Rommel, hero of the desert war, was chased out of Africa. Two months later, on July 10, the Allies landed on Sicily, and in two weeks' time Mussolini was overthrown. Badoglio sued for peace and Italy defected from the Tripartite Alliance on September 8 when she laid down her arms and surrendered unconditionally. Meanwhile the Americans invaded Georgia (July 5) and New Guinea (September 4), shattering our sprawling expeditionary forces there.

In late August Roosevelt and Churchill discussed global strategy at the Quebec conference. This was followed by the three power conference held in mid-October at Moscow where Messrs. Hull, Eden, and Molotov exchanged views. Toward the end of November the Cairo and Teheran conferences were convened.

While our Supreme Command still issued only optimistic forecasts about the prospect of the war, its confidence was apparently waning. On October 30, 1943, at the request of the Supreme Command, the imperial conference made a decision on "the last line of Empire defense." Acrimonious debates took place between the two fighting services. There was no conflict of views regarding the continental fronts to be defended but a violent dispute developed in connection with the Pacific fronts. This involved basic strategy, about which the Army and Navy were beginning to hold different conceptions.

Finally a compromise was reached under which it was rather vaguely agreed to secure a last line of defense as follows: from the

Kurile Islands in the north to the Marshall Islands in the south; thence to Dutch (western) New Guinea, Java, Sumatra, and the Andaman Islands in the Indian Ocean, joining there with the Burma front. The increasing enemy pressure also produced a tendency on the part of the Supreme Command to rely more on diplomacy to bolster the deteriorating situation. Shigemitsu, the foreign minister, was quick to take advantage of this tendency. He pursued with vigor a policy of equality and reciprocity toward the countries of East Asia. Independence was granted to Burma under Ba Mo August 1, to the Philippines under Laurel October 14, and a new treaty of alliance was concluded with the Chinese government under Wang Ching-wei October 30. On November 5 the conference of the Greater East Asiatic nations was convened in Tokyo. Six nations—China, the Philippines, Thailand (Siam), Manchukuo, India, and Japan—were represented. Chandra Bose took part as the head of the provisional government of free India. The conference was timed to meet before the Cairo conference, then believed to be imminent. After two days' debate it adopted the Joint Declaration of the East Asiatic Nations which in substance read as follows:

1. Anglo-American domination of East Asia must cease forever. Greater East Asia must be left to East Asians.

2. The nations of Greater East Asia will jointly defend their homelands and collaborate on a basis of mutual respect of their sovereignty and cultural traditions, to inaugurate an era of economic prosperity and cultural advancement in their region.

3. They will extend this spirit of fraternal collaboration to the world at large, and contribute to the progress of mankind by working together for the abolition of racial discrimination, the promotion of cultural intercourse, and the opening of natural resources throughout the world.

Later on, independence was granted also to the Indonesian Republic.

As Sumner Welles has aptly put it, this was the great gift to the nations of the South Pacific which had for years been aspiring in vain for independence. Had Japan lived up to her pledge faithfully she would have won the lasting gratitude of these nations. It was a pity, indeed, that our military trampled on what was to

be upheld as the Pacific Charter, and by their greed and atrocities alienated the sympathy of these Asiatic nations.

In February, 1944, the American forces landed on the Marshall Islands and subjected the Marianas to severe aerial bombardment. The American counteroffensive became more swift with each advance.

A climax was reached when Saipan in the Marianas was invaded in mid-June, 1944. This island, only 1,350 miles from Tokyo, constituted the most vital point in our outer defense system and was so strongly defended that it was generally believed to be impregnable. More than once I was told by the officers of the General Staff that Saipan was absolutely invincible. Our Supreme Command however made a strategic miscalculation. Anticipating an early attack on Palau Island, they transferred there the main fleet and the land-based air forces in order to deal a smashing blow to the hostile navy. The result was that Saipan, lacking both naval and air protection, proved surprisingly vulnerable. Within half an hour of the assault several thousand marines succeeded in establishing a beach-head.

It was reported that over 2,000 planes, 600 vessels, and 300,000 men were deployed in this invasion. Yet no matter what the cost to us we could not afford to lose this highly strategic island. Once in the enemy's hands it would disrupt our overseas communications to the occupied regions in the south. The island would also serve as an ideal advance base for long-range bombers, such as B-29's, which could easily fly from there to Tokyo and return. For such reasons the Marianas were within the defense line which the imperial conference had decided to hold at all costs. Therefore every effort had to be made to reinforce the hard-pressed garrison. Our entire combined fleet accordingly moved northward, encountering the American task force under Admiral Spruance in Philippine waters on June 19, 1944, four days after the invasion of Saipan. In the ensuing engagement our fleet was repelled, sustaining irreparable damage, including the loss of three first-line carriers and a good number of planes.

On the evening of June 21, 1944, I dined with several naval officers of GHQ. They were profuse in assuring me that our fleet had emerged victorious from the engagement. They even drank

hilariously to the spectacular victory. When the party dispersed one of my trusted friends, Captain Watanabe,⁵ remained behind and told me in strict confidence that what I had heard a few minutes before was the official version of the battle but that the truth was our fleet had suffered a devastating defeat. It was customary for GHQ to make false announcements of victory in utter disregard of acts, and for the elated and complacent public to believe in them. The next morning I called upon Marquis Matsudaira,⁶ minister of the imperial household and private secretary to Marquis Kido, the lord privy seal, and told him the truth about the naval battle. Matsudaira hastened in alarm to the palace to see his chief. Since it was the duty of the lord privy seal to advise the Emperor on important affairs of state, Kido in turn reported the matter to the throne.

The following day I called upon Admiral Yonai to ask his views on the future of the war. Confirming my views, the admiral said with his usual candor that losing Saipan would be the worst possible calamity, one which would make further war efforts altogether futile. I exchanged views also with Admiral Okada,⁷ who fully supported Yonai's opinion. At that critical moment the younger officers of the navy were clamoring for an all-out attack to recapture the island and were growing critical of the Army for not sharing their enthusiasm. The relations between the two fighting services, which had been none too satisfactory from the very beginning, were by this time deteriorating rapidly. Okada sagely said to me that although he was perfectly certain such an attack would only entail disaster he thought it advisable to let the "young fellows" have their own way once in order to reconcile them ultimately to their inevitable fate—defeat.

5. Capt. Yasuji Watanabe, IJN, was then a member of the Council of Military Affairs, Navy Dept., Tokyo. USSBS, *Interrogations of Japanese Officials* (U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1946), II, 574. (Ed.)

6. Marquis Tsuneo Matsudaira had had a distinguished diplomatic career, having held posts both in London and Washington. He was "the very epitome of the so-called 'liberal, pro-American, pro-British' clique which allegedly surrounded the Throne and which was the prime target of the young officers and other patriotic assassins." USSBS, *Japan's Struggle to End the War*, pp. 28-29.

7. Adm. Keisuke Okada, IJN, minister of the navy in 1927 and from 1932 to 1934, had also been premier from 1934 to 1936. In December, 1944, he was reported to be one of a group "secretly organizing a party to overthrow the regime, set up a new government headed by Prince Higashikuni, and ask the United States for peace terms." After the war he became one of the Emperor's close advisers. USSBS, *Japan's Struggle to End the War*, p. 30. (Ed.)

Three days later, June 26, Kido sent for Foreign Minister Shigemitsu and asked him if he could work out some plan looking toward an eventual diplomatic settlement of the war.

After a free and frank exchange of views the two concluded that while the fighting services were recklessly pursuing the war there was little chance of success in peace moves undertaken by either the court or government. Moreover, they concluded, should the secret leak out it would defeat the purpose, as the two services would be stung into announcing their determination to die "game." Therefore it would be inadvisable to embark upon such moves prematurely.

Shigemitsu then suggested that the jushin be made close advisers to the Emperor in order to strengthen the hands of the imperial court. Kido intimated in reply that he thought it problematical whether the jushin would be able to render such services. Obviously he did not think much of these statesmen. In addition he feared, it seems, that they would be regarded as so many Badoglios and might even prejudice the chances of peace. In his opinion in the final analysis only the personal intervention of the Emperor himself could bring about the end of hostilities.

In his affidavit submitted to the Tokyo War Crimes Court Kido stated that he agreed with the foreign minister that there would be no course left therefore but to take action on the strength of imperial decision, if an opportunity presented itself. In that event the lord keeper of the privy seal and the minister of foreign affairs would assume full responsibility respectively for the imperial court and the government. Kido and the foreign minister pledged to do their best together for the restoration of peace. This affidavit tallies exactly with the information I received from Shigemitsu late that same day.

At this meeting also the two statesmen agreed that Tojo must be ousted from office as a preliminary to such a settlement. Having agreed on this point, Shigemitsu saw Kido frequently in order to consult on the means of accomplishing it. For my part I met daily with Marquis Matsudaira, his secretary, to exchange information.

Colonel Matsutani, section chief of the Army General Staff, was very helpful in providing me with information on the military situation. Matsutani had served in London as assistant military at-

taché and possessed foresight rare in professional soldiers. As early as the spring of 1944 he had organized a group of influential staff officers of GHQ who were responsible for shaping over-all policies for the conduct of the war. This group comprised four army colonels, Matsutani, Hattori, Nishiura, and Ninomiya, and four navy captains, Fujii, Omaye, Yamamoto, and Yabuki. These officers were the very cream of our fighting services. They met regularly at the Sanno Hotel in Tokyo to coordinate strategic plans. Occasionally other officers of similar rank, including those who served as military aides to the prime minister, war minister, and navy minister, also joined the gathering. Ostensibly such meetings were held to ensure a harmonious cooperation of the rival services. Matsutani, however, tactfully steered the sessions, usually lasting far into the night, so as to make the participants gradually realize, and finally admit, the utter hopelessness of the military situation. He supplied me liberally with highly confidential and useful information as to what passed at these meetings. Matsutani was convinced that there was no resort left but diplomacy and sought my advice for what it was worth. Thus we got in the habit of meeting frequently to exchange views and consult on the means of bringing about an early termination of hostilities.

Toward the end of June, 1944, he called upon me with a memorandum entitled "On the Future Conduct of the War." He said it was high time Japan endeavored to seek the restoration of peace. He failed to understand why the government did not possess any definite peace plan. He wanted, therefore, to argue it out personally with the prime minister, General Tojo. Surprised, I told him this would be most unwise. Tojo would fly into a rage and Matsutani would be disgraced, he might even be imprisoned. I said I could not afford to lose his help at that critical time when I most needed it. I begged him not to take any precipitate action.

A few days later, July 3 to be exact, the colonel came in full uniform with decorations to say good-by to me. The previous evening he had had a stormy interview with Tojo and had greatly angered him. Overnight he found himself transferred to the China front. In those days it was Tojo's pet policy to send to that remote and dangerous front those officers who disagreed with him.

This episode testifies, I believe, to the exceptional courage and character of Matsutani, for few could have been so outspoken with

the dreaded Tojo. But the dictator did not know then that only fifteen days later he himself was to be ousted from office.

On June 29, 1944, I asked Prince Takamatsu, the younger brother of the Emperor, to summon Shigemitsu for a secret consultation. The prince, a naval captain, said that with the recent disastrous defeat our Navy was rendered unfit for further engagements. Besides, when Saipan fell, as it very soon would, there would be no *raison d'être* for our fleet. The war was as good as lost. Consequently the prince told the foreign minister he personally felt it highly advisable to seek the termination of hostilities without delay, provided in the process the imperial house was left intact. This was a significant remark, coming from the Emperor's brother! The prince had told me earlier, before our fleet sailed out to engage the enemy, that it was perhaps the last full-scale offensive our Navy could undertake and that therefore, regardless of the outcome of the impending battle, the Foreign Office should initiate steps toward a negotiated peace. As Prince Takamatsu consistently opposed the war against the democratic powers it was natural that he should desire its early end. It was also natural that he should strongly disapprove of General Tojo. Thus Prince Takamatsu became a rallying point for the anti-Tojo and antiwar forces.

By this time the Diet members had also become restive, and there quickly rose in the Diet a tide of hostile sentiment against the Tojo cabinet. With the help of the chief secretaries of both houses, Jiro Kobayashi and Misao Oki, I endeavored to organize a "down with Tojo" movement. The temper of the House of Representatives was more hostile to Tojo than that of the House of Peers. It was perhaps natural that only a fraction of each house possessed nerve enough to grasp the banner of truth and carry it firmly to the end. To begin with, the Diet had long ago ceased to function as an organ of representative government. Its power had been largely usurped by the Army. Yet a few courageous men revolted against military domination and joined efforts with us to combat the evil influence of the Army.

In this connection I discovered that the hereditary peers were mostly unreliable. They were primarily concerned with the security of their own houses which, in their minds, took precedence over the welfare of the nation. I felt a keen admiration, therefore,

for Kobayashi, chief secretary to the House of Peers, who succeeded in some measure in whipping up anti-Tojo feeling in the house. For days I was besieged by a constant stream of visitors, including Diet members, who wanted to climb onto our band wagon and to declare their antagonism to Tojo, whose days now seemed numbered.

As a result of our naval defeat of June 19 it was no longer possible to send reinforcements to Saipan. To the great dismay of our nation the island fell on July 9, 1944. The people were shocked into anger by what they believed to be the incompetent conduct of the war. Tojo, whose tyrannical dictatorship had long alienated popular sympathy, became an object of intense hatred. The jushin such as Prince Konoye and Admirals Okada and Yonai had been trying to hasten the downfall of the Tojo cabinet. From time to time I saw them and explained the international situation that confronted our country. I urged the necessity of a speedy end to the war, being thoroughly convinced of the folly and futility of continuing it. As a matter of fact, the loss of Saipan was the turning point in the trend of the Pacific war. Militarily it showed that further fighting was bound to be futile since we could not recapture the island. Politically the fall of Saipan opened an avenue for peace, however dim and distant, for it facilitated the ousting of Tojo from the premiership; as the author of the war he would never have consented to abandon the struggle. One of the members of the Strategic Bombing Survey Group visiting Tokyo after the war told me that he had asked Kido when it was that he first felt the necessity of ending hostilities. Kido replied without a moment's hesitation that it was when Saipan fell. He gave as his reasons his expectation of intensified air raids and the general loss of confidence in the crippled Navy. He said, however, that he had felt it still too early to take active steps toward the restoration of peace. Konoye, to whom a similar question was put, answered to the same effect. He also said that it was impossible to talk peace at that time as the Army was still fully committed to vigorous prosecution of the war.

Incidentally, Konoye seems to have cut a rather poor figure at this interrogation which took place on board a warship off Yokohama. Kido acquitted himself with credit; but the interrogators felt more sympathy for Konoye than for Kido, of whom one of

them aptly said, "Kido outsmarts himself." There we have the contrast of two opposite personalities, Konoye soft and shy, Kido hard and bold.

2

Tojo did not relinquish power without a struggle. He clung to office tenaciously and tried every means to retain it. He did not scruple to employ the military police against his opponents, arresting them on the flimsiest charges. Konoye and Okada and those who collaborated with them were in constant danger of being apprehended. I, too, often had to elude the military police when paying visits to, or making contact with, Kido and the jushin. These persons were all regarded with deep suspicion. I knew my telephone was tapped. I received frequent visits from police agents who with artificial smiles would invite my comments upon the futility of continuing the war or upon the "brutality" and "misgovernment" of General Tojo. Many walked into these traps and were summarily taken to jail.

Even with this wanton suppression of public opinion, however, the tottering fortunes of the cabinet were difficult to mend. On or about July 7, 1944, I learned that Tojo had decided upon a further reorganization of the cabinet. While Tojo held concurrently the portfolios of prime minister, minister of war, and minister of munitions in addition to that of army chief of staff (at one time he also held the Home Ministry), Admiral Shimada combined those of minister of the navy and naval chief of staff.⁸ Shimada was Tojo's yes man and very unpopular. It was through Shimada that Tojo, a virtual dictator, exerted an unlimited influence over the Navy. Quite understandably the bulk of the navy officers distrusted Shimada and wanted his removal. For a considerable time the jushin, in particular Admirals Okada and Yonai, had been demanding Shimada's dismissal. They also advised Tojo to give up the post of army chief of staff.

To counter these demands Tojo tried to secure the help of Yonai, whom he asked to join the cabinet. He wanted to invite

8. Adm. Shigetaro Shimada, IJN, was arrested and tried as a war criminal after the Allied occupation of Japan. On November 12, 1948, he was sentenced to life imprisonment upon conviction. *New York Times* (November 12, 1948), p. 1. (Ed.)

Admiral Yonai and General Abe into the cabinet as ministers without portfolio. Hirota, another jushin, was also to be invited. Abe⁹ was willing to accept on condition that Yonai also accepted. Tojo repeatedly approached Yonai but met only with sharp rebuffs. Thereupon, on July 17, 1944, Tojo reluctantly dismissed Admiral Shimada from the Ministry of the Navy and replaced him with Adm. Tadakuni Nomura, former naval attaché in Berlin, who was generally regarded as another yes man.¹⁰ That day Konoye had a lengthy conversation with Kido and then met three of the other senior jushin, Admiral Okada, Baron Wakatsuki,¹¹ and Baron Hiranuma. They all agreed that to continue the Tojo cabinet would be most injurious to the national interest. Three other less prominent jushin—Admiral Yonai, General Abe, and Hirota—later joined the gathering and with the sole exception of Abe approved the decision of the seniors. Abe, Tojo's confidant, believed that disbanding the Tojo cabinet would not mean the emergence of a better one.

Late that evening Okada visited Kido and asked him to transmit to the throne the decision of the jushin meeting. This decision was that it was necessary to establish a powerful national cabinet which would command the wholehearted and harmonious cooperation of the entire nation. They ruled out any partial reorganization of the Tojo cabinet as useless. This actually amounted to recommending the dismissal of Tojo and the appointment of an emergency national government. Kido fully shared the jushins' views and took steps to report the matter to the Emperor.

Tojo felt he was being unjustly assailed and redoubled his efforts to reconstruct the cabinet. At the same time he threatened the top jushin with disciplinary measures. It thus came to a trial of strength between Tojo and the jushin. Kido, Shigemitsu, and the senior jushin tried their best to bring about the collapse of the cabinet by obstructing Tojo's efforts to reconstruct it. Kido told

9. Gen. Nobuyuki Abe had been prime minister between August, 1939, and January, 1940. In 1942 he was president of the Imperial Rule Assistance Political Association, the totalitarian party set up to take the place of the several prewar political parties in Japan. (Ed.)

10. To be distinguished from Adm. Kichisaburo Nomura, the former ambassador to the United States, 1941-42. (Ed.)

11. Baron Reijiro Wakatsuki had been a member of various cabinets and was premier in 1926-28 and 1931. *International Who's Who 1944-45* (Europe Publications, Ltd.). (Ed.)

me that, as a final resort, Shigemitsu would do well to force the issue and advise Tojo to resign with his cabinet.

Kishi, minister of state without portfolio,¹² contended that the cabinet should resign in a body since it had failed to reconstruct itself by getting the jushin to join as members. When Tojo demanded Kishi's resignation as an individual, he refused. At one time Tojo, in tears, harangued the young minister for two hours. Uchida, minister of agriculture, who was a veteran politician and rather close to Konoye, also worked to hasten the downfall of the cabinet.

Both these ministers desired to follow Shigemitsu's lead. As a result I became active as a liaison between them. In order to avoid publicity, my contacts with them were officially those of a co-ordinator on behalf of the foreign minister. Two friends of mine rendered me invaluable assistance in this matter. One was Minobe, exceedingly able as director in the Ministry of Munitions. The other was Sakomizu, also a very capable director in the Ministry of Finance. The latter is the son-in-law of Admiral Okada who later became chief secretary to the Suzuki cabinet which terminated hostilities. Uchida and I even met at our riding club early in the morning and discussed the strategy on horseback.

On July 18 Tojo resigned as army chief of staff in favor of General Umezumi who was hurriedly summoned from Manchuria where he commanded the powerful Kwantung army. Tojo still retained the War Office. He refused to resign from the premiership until the last moment and even disputed his removal with the Emperor. Finally, after prolonged resistance, and to the intense relief of the harassed nation, he was prevailed upon to send in his resignation. This took place at 11:40 A.M. July 18, 1944. The collapse of his cabinet came after a tenure of two years and nine months. Nomura's position was the most mortifying of all. He had made a laughing stock of himself by being a minister for only seventeen hours! It was precisely on this day that Imperial General Headquarters belatedly published the news of the annihilation of the Saipan garrison, which, it was said, had fought to the end.

12. Nobusuke Kishi had held high posts in the administration of Manchukuo between 1936 and 1939 and was rated a civilian member of the Manchurian clique. USSBS, *Japan's Struggle to End the War*, pp. 26-27. On September 16, 1945, he was arrested as a war criminal but was released on December 24, 1948. *New York Times* (December 24, 1948), p. 1. (Ed.)

Prior to the resignation, the War Office submitted to the cabinet meeting the draft of a communiqué which in violent language accused the jushin group of plotting to overthrow the government. Shigemitsu took exception to this statement and the cabinet meeting "killed it." But the communiqué was released by the Cabinet Board of Information on July 20, two days after the resignation! This monstrous statement of course emanated from the Army. As a matter of fact Tojo himself severely denounced the jushin when he saw Kido before the audience with the Emperor at which he handed in his resignation.

The circumstances of Tojo's downfall are significant. They enhanced the political prestige of the jushin group which now became a power to be reckoned with. For the first time in years the military were put to rout by the concerted efforts of the senior statesmen. This victory helped to restore their self-confidence and thus was responsible for the active part they played in terminating the war. Also, these circumstances suggested that the time was approaching when a new and rationally minded cabinet could work for an early cease fire.

At this critical juncture the problem was to find a successor to Tojo as prime minister. As already stated, it was customary in those days for the lord privy seal, after consulting with the jushin, to advise the Emperor on the choice of the new prime minister. Such a conference was held from 4 to 8:30 P.M. the day of Tojo's resignation. Seven jushin¹³ took part: Konoye, Okada, Hiranuma, Wakatsuki, Yonai, Abe, and Hirota. Hara, president of the Privy Council, was also present.

Kido explained the circumstances that had led to Tojo's resignation and asked the participants to state their views. Abe spoke first, saying that in view of the critical trend of the war the Navy should come forward and bear the burden of government. He considered Yonai the best candidate. Yonai replied that he did not believe the military should meddle in affairs of government. They should remain true to their profession and concentrate on military affairs. They were unfit to govern. The practice of choosing a prime minister from among the generals and admirals should now cease; otherwise the nation would eventually be ruined. Wakatsuki, supported by Konoye and Kido, said that Yonai was quite right as

13. One jushin, Count Kiyoura, had died in November, 1942.

a matter of principle but that his recommendation was impractical in view of the situation. Others entered the discussion. Okada, and particularly Hara, earnestly pleaded for a national cabinet in which some five men should cooperate and accept joint responsibility. They should enlist the cooperation of men of ability and prestige. Hirota suggested a cabinet headed by a member of the imperial family.

But most of the jushin thought it advisable to recommend a general, in order to secure the support of the Army. Even Konoye was agreeable to this suggestion provided the Army discarded its dictatorial attitude and refrained from interfering in the civil affairs of the government. Ugaki, Terauchi,¹⁴ and Hata¹⁵ were mentioned in turn. The choice finally fell on Terauchi, commander in chief of the southern army in Singapore. But as there was some doubt whether he could be recalled to Tokyo, Kido asked for another candidate. Quite by accident Koiso's name was mentioned together with those of several other generals. Kido asked in a casual manner, "How about Koiso?" Yonai said he would do well, being a man of ability and courage. Hiranuma supported Yonai. It must be remembered that Koiso had served under Yonai and Hiranuma in the past. Although Konoye and Okada expressed doubt about Koiso, the conference chose Terauchi as the first candidate and Koiso or Hata as the second.

Tojo opposed the choice of Terauchi, alleging the impracticability of recalling a commander in chief from the front. Actually Terauchi was Tojo's mortal enemy. As a result the final choice fell on Koiso.

As soon as the palace conference was over I received a report from Kido's office. When I heard that Koiso was designated as prime minister my heart sank. It was obvious that the wrong man had been selected.

Konoye looked considerably worried. He did not hide from me his distrust of Koiso. He told me he felt disturbed by the fact that there was a strong leftist faction in the Army which was planning a revolution. Any such revolution, he said, would be far

14. Gen. Count Hisaichi Terauchi was a member of the Supreme War Council after 1939. *Who's Who in Japan with China and Korea, 1941-42*. (Ed.)

15. Marshal Shunroku Hata, former army commander in China, was tried as a war criminal after the Allied occupation of Japan. He was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. *New York Times* (November 12, 1948), p. 1. (Ed.)

more serious than defeat in the war. Even in defeat, he said, we could save the crown, but in case of a Communist revolution our national structure would be shattered to pieces.

According to Kido's diary Konoye expressed this apprehension at the palace conference, saying that in view of this situation in the Army the selection of a war minister was a matter of the greatest importance.

After spending a wakeful night Konoye the next morning called upon Kido and advised him to recommend to the throne a coalition cabinet under Koiso and Yonai. Kido thereupon asked for the views of other jushin. All except Abe agreed to Konoye's suggestion. Thus it was that Yonai was recommended to the Emperor as vice premier to assist Koiso.

On July 20, 1944, the Emperor entrusted the formation of the cabinet to Koiso and Yonai. He commanded them to observe the provisions of the Constitution faithfully and to exercise caution so as not to provoke the Soviet Union, a significant utterance in view of the trend and temper of the times. Koiso became prime minister and Yonai minister of the navy. According to regulations then in force the ministers of war and the navy were required to be generals and admirals in active service. Both Koiso and Yonai, however, were on the reserve list. Arrangements were made at once which put Yonai back on active duty. Koiso also wanted to return to active service in order to combine with the premiership the portfolio of minister of war. He knew from his own experience in the past that otherwise he could not conduct the government as he wished. But the Army, still controlled by Tojo, refused categorically to consider his request for reinstatement on the active list. The truth was that Tojo wanted to continue as minister of war in the new cabinet. In this capacity he could easily have dominated the government, which, in turn, would in effect be taking orders from the Army. Nothing could have been more unpalatable for Koiso, for it would have amounted to a virtual continuation of the Tojo regime.

Finally after acrimonious negotiations a bargain was struck between the two. Tojo would retire from active service and Koiso would remain on the inactive list. And, as a compromise, Gen. Gen Sugiyama was appointed minister of war.¹⁶ This certainly was a

16. Gen. Gen Sugiyama had been war minister in 1937-38 and member of the Supreme War Council, 1939-40. (Ed.)

great disappointment for Tojo and his followers in the Army, but it was also a disappointment to Koiso who had to renounce his cherished desire of combining the prime minister's office with that of the minister of war. The Army was offended and assumed an attitude of icy hostility toward Koiso. Koiso did not realize fully what a serious handicap this compromise was to prove for him later on. For a prime minister whose power was not based on a commanding position in, and on the support of, the Army was a prime minister in name only. Koiso's government earned the unsavory nickname of a "charcoal-burning car," since, after the fashion of these wartime conveyances in Japan, it moved slowly and haltingly.

On the other hand Koiso was an astute politician and one who did not easily despair. He openly declared it his avowed aim to adjust relations between the Supreme Command and the civil government. As has been explained above, the Supreme Command traditionally enjoyed a unique position entirely independent of the government, and the government, on the other hand, was not allowed to interfere in military affairs. The Army maintained exclusive jurisdiction over these and jealously guarded the so-called extraconstitutional prerogatives of the Supreme Command. It had also been in the habit of encroaching heavily upon the government's jurisdiction in civil affairs by exploiting its undisputed predominance in the nation. The Supreme Command was subordinate only to the Emperor. This meant, in actuality, that it was subservient to none, that it acknowledged no superior power. Thus the two fighting services, particularly the Army, wielded an unconstitutional power which knew no bounds and before which the civil government was utterly powerless. The government was entirely subjected to the often whimsical pleasure of the Army. This was indeed an unendurable situation.

Was Koiso a suitable man to enforce civil control over the Army? It is doubtful, to say the least. To go further, Koiso is generally suspected of involvement in the plots of the younger officers to create disturbances in order to seize power. The March incident of 1931 was one of these notorious cases. Ever an advocate of a forceful policy, Koiso supported an adventurous foreign policy in order to create crises at home. Such crises offered the Army an opportunity to assert its influence. Through a series of crises military influence rose steadily until the Army completely

dominated the country and dictated its fate. Many doubt whether Koiso can plead innocence of participation in the guilt of the Army.

On assuming office on July 22 Koiso issued the statement customary on such occasions. He declared that the war situation was extremely grave and that the only possibility of frustrating hostile attacks was by the harmonious cooperation of the entire nation. The new cabinet was inflexibly determined to prosecute the war to a victorious conclusion and would strive earnestly for close harmony between the civil government and the Supreme Command. At the same time it would pursue the already established course of foreign policy. This was a statement full of implications.

In the first place, the new cabinet committed itself irrevocably to the all-out prosecution of hostilities. Thus the warlike character of the Koiso cabinet was clearly established at the outset. It was generally believed that this commitment was made largely on the insistence of the Army, which had made it a condition for furnishing a war minister to the cabinet. Readers will recall that, as often in the past, either the Army or Navy could prevent the formation of a cabinet or cause its immediate downfall. This was done by withholding the nomination of a war or navy minister or by the resignation of one of these officials from the cabinet.

When the Tojo cabinet fell the desire uppermost in the minds of a few farsighted men such as Konoye, Okada, and Yonai, was to replace it with a cabinet which could pave the way for ending the war. Yonai, in fact, was installed in the new cabinet as vice premier, to share power with Koiso, so as to guide the government policy toward the early restoration of peace. The retention of Shigemitsu as foreign minister was also highly gratifying to the jushin group. But the Army was not to be fooled. By getting Koiso to commit his cabinet to full-scale prosecution of the war, it stole a march upon its opponents.

Moreover Koiso was utterly ignorant of the realities of the military situation. It was thus impossible to get him to work for a termination of the war. Yonai told me he was surprised to discover that Koiso had come from Korea with a ready-made list of cabinet members, mostly names of his old henchmen and cronies in Korea. These men were entirely unacquainted with the difficulties then confronting the country. They were popularly dubbed

the "Korean cabinet" in contrast with Tojo's "Manchurian cabinet." Yonai gave what advice he decently could under the circumstances but it remained for the most part unheeded. The Koiso cabinet was clearly a severe disillusionment to him and his friends. There was little opportunity left for Yonai to work for peace.

While the Emperor desired to see the new cabinet operated on the basis of a close working partnership of Koiso and Yonai, actually Yonai thought, or preferred to think, that his responsibility as Koiso's partner ended with the formation of the cabinet. After that, he was a mere navy minister and, as such, he did not like to interfere with what Koiso did as prime minister.

Koiso's statement of July 22 expressed deep concern over the relations between the civil government and the Supreme Command. He enlarged on this at his first press conference, saying however that in view of the critical military situation the Army should take precedence over the civil government. On the other hand, he stated, the prime minister should be kept fully acquainted with the intentions of the Supreme Command. Otherwise he could not administer the government efficiently to meet the exigencies of the times. This statement upholding army supremacy was merely a bid for participation in the council of war from which he, as a general on the reserve list, was excluded.

Since the end of 1937, when Imperial General Headquarters was established to direct hostilities in China, there had of course existed the so-called liaison conference between the government and the Supreme Command. This conference began to meet frequently after the inauguration of the second Konoye cabinet in July, 1940. It gradually became the highest state organ for deliberating upon the conduct of the war. It did not possess any legal status, being merely an informal arrangement between the government and Imperial General Headquarters, but as such its importance is impossible to overemphasize. Ever since the outbreak of the Pacific war important policies of state had been deliberated upon and determined at this conference. This was largely on the initiative of the Army, which utilized the conference as an instrument for securing the government's compliance and cooperation in advancing its aims and aspirations. The liaison conference in fact served the Supreme Command as a convenient tool for imposing its will upon the government.

The members of the conference from the government included the prime minister, foreign minister, ministers of war, navy, finance, and the president of the Planning Board. Those from the Supreme Command were the chiefs of staff of the Army and Navy, who were usually accompanied by the vice chiefs of staff. Other cabinet ministers including the home minister and ministers of munitions, transportation, agriculture, etc., were also invited when their participation was considered necessary or desirable. The real power however was vested in the three-man secretariat, including the directors of the Military Affairs Bureau of the Army and Navy and the chief secretary of the cabinet. The latter was only a titular member, the secretariat being actually controlled by the first two, who were the most powerful men in the fighting services. It was in fact these two young officers, usually generals or admirals, who manipulated the military and civil affairs of the nation. They went even to the extent of engineering the cabinet changes, which were so frequent in more recent years. I remember an occasion when these two officials were guests of Shigemitsu, the foreign minister, at a diplomatic dinner and one of them said, "I wonder if it is not high time we changed the foreign minister." His voice was loud enough for the entire company to hear! This secretariat was assisted by a still more powerful group of army and navy staff officers, usually below the rank of colonel or captain, who were responsible for shaping more important policies. Thus behind the scenes these young officers exercised amazingly far-reaching influence on the destiny of the country.

Koiso wanted to reconstruct this liaison conference and adjust the delicate relations between the Supreme Command and the civil government. He wanted to assume the position in the liaison conference which he had inherited from Tojo. In order to do this, with imperial sanction he set up on August 8 a new body called the "Supreme Council on the Conduct of the War" or the "Supreme Council for the Direction of the War." The task assigned to this council was to shape and determine fundamental policies on the conduct of the war and to adjust and harmonize the requirements of the Supreme Command and the government.

The council was to meet in the imperial palace and to hold discussions in the presence of the Emperor when important questions were on the agenda. It was to have six members, namely, the prime

minister, the foreign minister, the ministers of war and the navy, and the chiefs of staff of the Army and Navy. When it was deemed necessary other state ministers and vice chiefs of the Army and Navy might attend. The grandiose title "Supreme War Council" exercised a magic spell over the imagination of the nation, which hailed its inauguration with enthusiasm in spite of knowing little of its real nature. In substance, however, the new body was hardly different from the old liaison conference. As a matter of fact, the Army issued a directive ordering the press to treat the Supreme War Council with indifference, as "there was no departure from the liaison conference." To the disappointment of General Koiso the staff officers continued to interfere, as in the good old days, and the secretariat continued to hold sway over the whole body.

This was one of the many instances when the Army expressed its displeasure and its disapproval of Koiso. Indeed, as early as July 30, barely a week after the inauguration of the new cabinet, General Sato,¹⁷ director of the Military Affairs Bureau of the War Ministry, harangued an assembly of leaders of the youth movement. A passionate admirer of Tojo, he said then that the collapse of the Tojo cabinet was due to unpatriotic intrigues of the jushin group and that the present cabinet which had emerged as a result would not last more than a couple of months. Such being the general temper prevailing in the Army, Koiso's path was truly a difficult one.

Of particular interest was Koiso's statement, on assuming office July 22, that the cabinet would pursue the established course of foreign policy. By this he meant to indicate that our course of conquest would continue in a southerly direction. He was thus tendering an olive branch to Moscow, in obedience to the Emperor's specific command to cultivate amicable relations with the Soviet Union. But in diplomacy unilateral assurances seldom beget the desired end, particularly when they come from a party which, like Japan at that time, is suffering a series of disastrous defeats.

In midsummer of 1944 our position in the southern Pacific theater was rapidly deteriorating. American offensives developed swiftly and with increasing vigor. The enemy landed on Guam on

17. Lt. Gen. Kenryo Sato was convicted as a war criminal and, on November 12, 1948, sentenced to life imprisonment, *New York Times* (November 12, 1948), p. 1. (Ed.)

July 21, the day before the inauguration of the Koiso cabinet. Tinian was invaded three days later. A deep gloom settled upon the nation.

In Europe the German situation was also critical. The Allied armies landed in great force on the Normandy coast in early June. The amazing scale of the amphibious operations took us by surprise. The German High Command had strongly assured us that the coast defenses were impregnable and that the invasion would be quickly repelled. They boastfully predicted that under no circumstances would the invaders be permitted to remain on the beach more than nine hours. Our embassy in Berlin was more Nazi than Hitler and sent home forecasts so optimistic that they often verged on absurdity. Contrary to all these predictions, several fully equipped divisions completed the landing before dusk on D day. Moreover, in less than two months' time, it was reported, the Allies were pouring 30,000 men and 30,000 tons of munitions onto the coast each day. That was more than enough to dishearten us, as the defenses of our home islands were far more vulnerable than the European invasion coast. Our amazement was boundless when we saw the American forces land on Saipan only ten days after D day in Europe. The Allies could execute simultaneous full-scale offensives in both the European and Asiatic theaters! It was two days after Tojo's fall from power that a time bomb exploded in Hitler's headquarters. The Führer narrowly escaped death. Obviously times were out of joint in Germany.

Italy had defaulted in September of the previous year following the reverses of the Axis in North Africa. The second Roman Empire vanished with Mussolini's dreams of conquest and Il Duce hastened to his doom. The triumphant Allies met in conference in late November, 1943, at Cairo and later at Teheran. At the former gathering, to which Generalissimo Chiang of China was invited, Operation Capital against Japan was agreed upon. The Cairo meeting was a conspicuous landmark in the history of Allied global strategy, as it marked the beginning of serious counteroffensives against Japan. A declaration was also issued stating that "Japan shall be stripped of all the islands in the Pacific which she has seized or occupied since the beginning of the first World War in 1914, and . . . all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores, shall be

restored to the Republic of China." It stated too that "Japan will also be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed."

Upon word of the Cairo declaration a special conference was held in the Foreign Office to study its significance. I listened in silence to the discussion. The participants, without exception, appeared shocked by the severity of the terms. But most of them did not take them too seriously, regarding them as only an inducement offered to Chungking or as a diplomatic gesture to forestall China's defection from the Allied camp. China was then in a serious plight since the Allies, preoccupied elsewhere, could not help her effectively. There was a precedent in April, 1915, during the first World War, when the Allies secretly promised Constantinople and the Dardanelles to Russia in order to prevent her from deserting them. Russia at that time was reeling from a shattering defeat inflicted by Germany. The Allies did not desire to pay such an exorbitant price and keenly regretted it soon afterward but they thought it essential at that critical juncture. Such was generally the tone of the argument.

I myself thought, however, that there was more than that in the Cairo declaration. While in World War I the United States offered Germany the Fourteen Points as an inducement for peace, this time the Allies announced the Cairo declaration as terms to be meted out to Japan. In the former, attractive terms were displayed in order to invite Germany to lay down her arms; in the latter, harsh conditions were announced warning Japan of her impending fate. This I believed was because of the unique character of the second World War, which unlike the first was being fought on the basis of unconditional surrender. There was to be no halfway compromise, no negotiated peace. Although it was undeniable that the declaration possessed far-reaching implications for our nation, its text was not published in full as the Army feared it might cause public apprehension.

The Teheran conference was held, we understood, because the Soviet Union desired to avoid the complications that would result if she participated in the Cairo conference. This gave us a sense of relief, as it showed that Moscow still was careful to maintain a correct attitude as a neutral power in the Pacific war. Yet as was recently revealed, Stalin confided to the Allies at this conference

that the Red Army in Siberia was adequate only for defensive operation, and must be trebled in size to undertake offensives.¹⁸ This implied that the Soviet Union would join in the war against Japan only after the defeat of Germany. During the Moscow conference in October of 1944 this was specified by Stalin to mean three months after the capitulation of Germany.

The Teheran communiqué said, among other things, that the Allies "have reached complete agreement as to the scope and timing of the operations to be undertaken from the east, west and south." The Normandy assault, Operation Overlord, was the most ambitious of these operations; but the Allies also carried out the attack upon the southern coast of France while vigorously pursuing the hard-pressed German forces in Italy. For Germany, however, the greatest danger came from the collapse of the eastern front, where the victorious Red Army was battering the broken ranks of the Reichswehr. Germany was now fighting in desperation.

On August 25, 1944, Paris was liberated. With 3,000,000 troops General Eisenhower was preparing an attack on the Siegfried line. It was reported that since D day the Allied Army in France had used 8,000,000 shells each month, a staggering figure which impressed us powerfully.

On September 7, 1944, our expeditionary force of 270,000 men which had marched to the gates of Imphal in Manipur, India, met defeat. Most of this force perished in battle or later of starvation. The disaster of Imphal was perhaps the worst of its kind yet chronicled in the annals of war. One of the regimental commanders who survived the retreat called upon me in Tokyo in his tattered uniform. I could hardly recognize him. He told me how the ranks had thinned daily as thirst and hunger overtook the retreating column, and how the sick and wounded had to be abandoned by hundreds. In order to avoid capture these men were usually forced to seek death at their own hands. Only 70,000 of the original force survived.

Meanwhile new enemy pressure from the south was being intensified. In mid-October the Third Task Force under Admiral Halsey subjected Okinawa and Formosa to a series of aerial attacks. This was followed on October 20, 1944, by the invasion of Leyte

18. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 779.

in the Philippines. Some 650 vessels joined in the operation. Without encountering great resistance, four divisions succeeded in the initial landing. I happened to be addressing a meeting in the Diet on this day. When I announced the invasion there was consternation. Nobody seemed to have expected such swift developments. Indeed, the news was so alarming that the whole country was thrown into confusion. The nation asked "Where is our Navy?" Three days later fierce naval engagements occurred in Philippine waters.

On October 24 our land-based planes in Luzon flew out in strength to strafe the American carriers as a preliminary to an all-out attack by the main strength of our combined fleet. This operation was called "Shō," or victory, and was really a very desperate one. On X day the entire fleet was to force the passage into Leyte Gulf in order to annihilate the invaders by gunfire. X day was designated as October 25. Admiral Toyoda,¹⁹ the commander in chief, issued a heroic order of the day from his headquarters at the Naval College in the outskirts of Tokyo where he directed the operation: "We are throwing our entire strength into the impending battle. You are expected to render your life to the beloved fatherland, fighting courageously and tenaciously in order to achieve the task assigned to you."

The fleet was divided into three groups. The central group under Admiral Kurita sailed from Linga, near Singapore, with 5 battleships, 10 heavy cruisers, 2 light cruisers, and 15 destroyers. This was the main fleet, and included the pride of our Navy, the battleships *Yamato* and *Musashi*. These two superdreadnaughts of 64,000 tons displacement were equipped with nine 18-inch guns, the largest ever mounted in a ship. These monster warships were to lead the assault against the Leyte beachhead.

The southern element consisted of two separate forces, one under Nishimura (2 battleships, 1 heavy cruiser, and 4 destroyers) and another under Shima (2 heavy cruisers, 1 light cruiser, and 4 destroyers.) Nishimura sailed from Brunei (Borneo) while Shima

19. Adm. Soemu Toyoda, IJN, was one "of the group of senior naval officers who apparently made strong efforts to prevent war with the United States." In May, 1945, he became commander in chief, Over-all Naval Staff, and also served as chief of Naval General Staff from that date until the end of the war. He was ordered arrested as a war criminal December 2, 1945, but was eventually cleared of responsibility for crimes committed by naval personnel, in September, 1949, and released. USSBS, *Interrogations of Japanese Officials*, p. 573; *New York Times* (September 6, 1949), p. 14. (Ed.)

sped southward from Amami-Oshima, an island lying north of Okinawa.

The northern group under Admiral Ozawa consisted of 4 carriers, 2 battleship carriers, 3 light cruisers, and 4 destroyers. This group sailed from the Inland Sea. This task force comprised our main carrier strength but carried only 116 planes in all, of which more than 50 were fighters. Moreover the planes varied in design and speed and there were very few well-trained pilots. This was largely due to the fact that a large number of carrier planes had been diverted during October 12-15 to land bases in order to counter attack the American task force that had subjected Formosa and Luzon to a series of severe raids. In these engagements, our Air Force suffered irreparable losses without inflicting much damage on the American fleet. Consequently the situation became highly critical for our fleet which, thus deprived of its air arm, was forced to reduce its radius of operation to within the limited range of flight of the land-based Air Force. In other words, our fleet could not expect any effective air protection once it sailed beyond the narrow range of land-based planes. Together with the depletion in fleet oil tankers, this interfered gravely with the mobility of our Navy. This was precisely why when the enemy landed on Leyte our Naval High Command decided upon staking its entire strength in an all-out battle. Lack of air strength and of oil made it imperative that the whole Navy should be thrown into this assault on the enemy beachhead.

Supreme coordination was required to execute the Shō operation since the three groups, moving from different directions, had to converge at the entrance to Leyte Gulf at the same time. Of the three, the northern force which included the carriers was to serve as a decoy to draw Halsey's main fleet away from Leyte so that the operation of other groups should be facilitated. In this thankless mission the northern force succeeded but it paid a heavy price, losing all four carriers besides a light cruiser and two destroyers. The southern force was destroyed by Admiral Kinkaid's old battleships—those salvaged from the mud of Pearl Harbor—which were waiting in ambush. The central force, although much damaged, steamed through San Bernardino Strait into Leyte Gulf and might have succeeded in wiping out Sprague's fleet if Kurita had realized the advantages of his position. All the battles were

fought in great confusion. Finally all of our three groups met disastrous defeats, largely through lack of air cover. The *Musashi* sank, the *Yamato* was crippled. Our loss during four days of running battle was staggering. It amounted to 4 carriers, 3 battleships, 6 heavy cruisers, 4 light cruisers, and 11 destroyers. Practically every surviving unit sustained heavy damages. We never recovered from this disastrous defeat.²⁰ In fact, this battle spelled the end of the glorious history of our Navy. We no longer possessed a fleet capable of an offensive operation. Even as "a fleet in being" its value was rendered negligible. The defeat also definitely ended our hopes of repelling the enemy or reinforcing our garrisons on Leyte. The fate of the Philippines was now as good as sealed.

Immediately after the conclusion of these battles I called upon Admiral Okada and asked his views regarding future operations. He said that without air support our fleet was entirely at the mercy of the enemy. We could still build carriers but it was impossible to replace the mounting losses in planes and pilots. Carriers without planes and planes without pilots! We were indeed faced with a distressing situation. Especially grievous was the disappearance of trained pilots, who had been all too few even at the outset of the war. When the combined fleet attacked Pearl Harbor two of the six carriers had to be manned by pilots who had undergone only one month's intense training for the purpose. Incidentally, as torpedoes were not available for the planes in sufficient quantity, they had to be shipped after the main fleet had sailed. That showed conclusively how inadequately the Navy was prepared for war. Moreover, after almost two years stockpiles were largely exhausted and we were running short of essential war materials. It was clearly no longer possible to continue the struggle, let alone mount another offensive on the high seas.

At the beginning of the war we possessed 10 carriers. During the war 17 were added, making the total 27.²¹ Of these we had already lost 17, or 63 per cent of the carrier strength. That left us only 10 carriers, although 4 more were under construction when the war ended.

Our public was kept in entire ignorance of this shattering defeat.

20. See James A. Field, Jr., *The Japanese at Leyte Gulf* (Princeton University Press, 1947).

21. USSBS, *Summary Report (Pacific War)* (U. S. Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 10. (Ed.)

Instead they were fed with false announcements from Imperial General Headquarters which claimed a resounding victory. The Army went so far as to offer the strained explanation that the enemy action on Leyte was an indication of growing impatience on their part, particularly in view of the approaching presidential election in the United States. Koiso, himself a dupe of the militarists' propaganda and blissfully ignorant of the gravity of the situation, made a foolhardy statement that we were determined to hold Leyte, cost what it might. Indeed, as late as November 8 he went to the extreme of publicly declaring that the battle of Leyte would irrevocably settle the issue of the war. In so doing he did not take the trouble of ascertaining beforehand the pleasure of the Supreme Command, which was seriously annoyed, as by that time it had virtually abandoned General Yamashita's ²² tattered divisions to their fate in the Philippines.

Our defeats in the war did not fail to produce international reactions. On November 7, 1944, the anniversary of the Red Revolution, Generalissimo Stalin unexpectedly denounced Japan as an aggressor, creating widespread speculation throughout the world. We were shocked by this denunciation which seemed at that moment uncalled for. As every gesture, however insignificant, on the part of the Kremlin as a rule presaged some action, we could not take this ominous statement lightly. Since about the middle of September, moreover, we had been approaching the Soviet government with a proposal for sending a special envoy to Moscow entrusted with the mission of improving our relations with them. Our disappointment at Stalin's statement was therefore doubly keen.

Most embarrassing was the position of the Foreign Office at the customary gala reception which was held at the Soviet embassy on the evening of the anniversary. Since Stalin had slapped us in the face it seemed natural to give a reasonable hint—not too strong—of dissatisfaction with him. The Foreign Office hastily telephoned the cabinet ministers advising them to stay away from the recep-

22. Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita had been commander of Japanese forces in Malaya and the Philippines. He was arrested in the Philippines as a war criminal on September 3, 1945. He was the first Japanese war criminal to be tried. On December 7, 1945, he was found guilty of atrocities committed in the Philippine theater. On February 23, 1946, he was hanged. Harold Wakefield, *New Paths for Japan* (Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 177-179; *New York Times* (September 3, 1945), p. 1; (December 7, 1945), p. 1; (February 23, 1946), p. 1.

tion in view of the delicate situation. Late in the evening I went to the embassy with Shigemitsu, the foreign minister. Malik, the youthful Soviet ambassador, met us at the entrance. His attitude was quite correct and his staff, women as well as men, wore beaming smiles of welcome; but somehow there was a chill in the atmosphere, inexplicable but unmistakable. It was, I thought, like the sharp touch of the first frost that withers the late flowers. In short, the reception was a nice affair but there was none of the enthusiasm that had characterized the reception of a year before. The difference was perhaps more suggestive than it appeared to a casual observer.

Next day an emergency conference of experts on Russian affairs was held at the Foreign Office to study the probable meaning of Stalin's statement. As I listened to the discussion I could not help being amused by the human frailty of those who always try to seek refuge in wishful thinking. With the sole exception of the chief of the Russian section, who warned us that the dictator's remarks were a virtual nullification of the neutrality pact, all the participants advised the foreign minister not to attach too much importance to it. But the general public thought it quite important and openly criticized the foreign minister for his failure to appease the powerful neighbor. A few days later Sato, our ambassador in Moscow, called upon Molotov under instructions and inquired about Stalin's statement. He was assured that Stalin meant to refer to the past conduct of Japan and did not imply any criticism of her present policy. With that the matter was for the moment allowed to drop.

On November 10 President Wang Ching-wei of the Nanking government died in a hospital at Nagoya. With his death all our past efforts to sustain the Nanking regime ended in disaster. As if to make up for this misfortune the Army loudly announced the capture of Kweilin, the strategic city in southern China where extensive offensives were under way with the object of destroying air bases capable of accommodating B-29's. On November 24, however, the first large-scale attack was made on Tokyo by an armada of B-29's 100 strong and based on Saipan. Such was the shock of this experience that the government ceased to function during the raid. The people began to get jittery.

To make matters worse, a great earthquake on November 7

caused extensive damage in Aichi, Miye, and Shizuoka prefectures. This might easily have been more devastating than the quake which visited the Tokyo area in 1923 but for the fact that its center was in the sea bottom off Miye prefecture. The government was ominously silent on the damage for fear it might affect the morale of the people. As a result, we were first informed of the disaster by American broadcasts.

Meanwhile our situation on Leyte became hopeless. On December 26 the United States announced the successful conclusion of the Leyte operation. As the eventful year drew to a close it was rumored that Koiso was likely to be forced out of office because of his thoughtless remarks about Leyte's deciding the outcome of the war. Actually, on New Year's eve, the fate of the cabinet hung in the balance, in consequence of an inquiry from the throne. This took the form of a blunt question as to what General Koiso meant to do toward retrieving the deteriorating situation both at home and abroad. The Emperor said he could not understand why, in spite of the prime minister's repeated assurances that Leyte would be effectively defended, there now remained, it seemed, small chance of holding it against growing enemy pressure. The Emperor pointed out that although the prime minister had frequently and frantically exhorted the nation to stake everything on Leyte in order to make a last stand there, the battleground was now shifting to Luzon, endangering the Philippines as a whole. Would not the nation, he asked, be shocked to learn the desperate situation? Would not the people's disillusionment result in the deterioration of morale, thus hampering the production of war material which was already falling far short of expectations? What measures did General Koiso contemplate for coping with such a dire eventuality? Such a question was but seldom addressed by the Emperor to an actual prime minister. It was therefore rightly interpreted to imply a lack of confidence in Koiso. Hence the cabinet crisis.

Late on New Year's eve I met Admiral Okada and Marquis Matsudaira, Kido's secretary. We three discussed the political situation. We were all agreed that Koiso had been a poor selection for prime minister. He had done even less than we had expected, since he had made no effort at all to explore the possibilities of peace. Therefore the sooner the cabinet resigned the better. Nevertheless the cabinet survived this crisis and muddled through three

more months, during which the situation grew worse day by day, both externally and internally.

The year 1945 dawned to the shrieks of air-raid sirens. I find the following entry in my diary:

Monday, January 1—Fine weather. Early in the morning a small number of planes raided Tokyo area. Toward the direction of Ueno the sky was ablaze with fire. Poor helpless people rendered homeless on New Year's day!

This is the year of decision. This year will see the end of war both in Europe and Asia. Sad though it is, we must face realities squarely. We have lost the war.

Since last December the Germans have been attacking with vigor in the West and have made some advance. If this gives the appearance of German strength, it is deceptive. A local success of this character cannot alter the fundamental situation which is already past repair.

As for the Pacific war theater, our situation is extremely grave. We can no longer hold Leyte. The American forces landed successfully on Mindoro and are now pushing northward toward Luzon in great strength. In view of the rapid depletion of the sinews of war, it is impossible to improve the military situation which is bound to deteriorate daily. Defeat now stares us stark in the face. There is only one question left: how can we avert the chaos attendant upon a disastrous defeat and how shall we seek the reconstruction of Japan, so defeated?

The preservation of my fatherland, that is the paramount task assigned to me by fate. The hostile attack is developing so surprisingly swiftly that it may be diplomacy cannot intervene before it is too late. But that will surely mean the complete destruction of the nation. I shudder to think of such an eventuality. I must therefore redouble my efforts to expedite the restoration of peace. For that purpose I shall 1) cultivate closer contact with the lord privy seal and the jushin; 2) secure friends in the Army who will collaborate with me secretly; 3) enlighten public opinion through wider exchange of views with politicians, publicists, and press representatives. Chances are that the re-orientation of our policy is yet feasible. If so, the nation will escape annihilation. Even so, it will probably be accompanied by civil disturbances. Much blood will flow—and who knows that mine, too will not be spilt? I do not, of course, hesitate to sacrifice my life for the cause of the country. On the contrary, I consider it my privilege. But I do not like to die meaninglessly. I must hold on to my life tenaciously in order to exert my utmost efforts to save my country and people.

This, in short, is my New Year's day prayer.

On January 9 the enemy invaded Luzon after repeated air attacks on Formosa and Okinawa. It was reported that some 850 vessels took part in the invasion and that before dark four divisions of 70,000 men were put ashore, securing a beachhead more than 15 miles deep. This clearly showed that our defense line was but thinly held and that we could not expect much from General Yamashita. In fact we had only two divisions in the affected area. Yet Koiso came out with a fresh statement that all depended on the outcome of the struggle in the Philippines.

Meanwhile I set about organizing a group of liberal thinkers in order to prepare for the day of reckoning. Yuzo Yamamoto, a well-known novelist and playwright, now a leading member of the House of Councillors, shared my concern. He gave me valuable advice and assistance. He was Konoye's confidant and was one who held deep apprehensions of the possibility of Communist disturbances in the event of our sudden collapse. I told him that as the people were rather ignorant of the realities of the situation, they would be shocked into a stupor in case of an unexpected capitulation. In order to ensure a smooth transition from war to peace we had to prepare our public for the inevitable. It was necessary to fill quickly the moral vacuum that would ensue upon our defeat. Otherwise the Communists would exploit the situation to their advantage. We gathered several outstanding men of liberal mind and organized them into a secret association. The group met frequently at my residence in Sannencho, in utmost secrecy in order to avoid molestation by the military police. Among the original members were Tetsujiro Nishida, the foremost philosopher of our day; Yoshinari Abe²³ and Kotaro Tanaka, renowned educators who had recently served as ministers of education; Naoya Shiga and Saneatsu Mushakoji, noted novelists who enjoyed a great following among the reading public; Tetsuro Watsuji, Kiyoshi Tomitsuka, and Tetsuji Tanikawa, well-known professors and publicists.

All the members of the group agreed that the preservation of the imperial house was of paramount importance. History testified to the fact that the imperial house served as the unique stabilizing force in the political and social life of our people. The people were apt to swing to extremes and thus, to borrow a phrase

23. Currently (1950) head of the Peers' School, Tokyo. (Ed.)

from Macaulay, were like a ship "all sail and no anchor." The throne was the anchor without which there was no knowing where the nation would drift in times of storm and stress. Our group soon commenced work upon an imperial rescript to be issued on the termination of the war. Our activities were known to, and approved by, men like Konoye, Kido, and Shigemitsu. Shigemitsu in particular extended protection and guidance to the group.

Toward the end of January, 1945, the Supreme Command presented the government with "a plan to increase fighting power for the forthcoming decisive battles." This document called for the production, annually, of 40,000 aircraft, 5,000,000 tons of steel, and 1,800,000 tons of merchant shipping. It was obviously impossible to produce so much. For example, the current monthly output of combat aircraft was 1,685,²⁴ and the total of all aircraft produced in 1944 was 28,180.²⁵ By contrast the goal of production set for the period from January, 1944, to August, 1945, had been 66,000 aircraft, or an average of 3,300 per month.²⁶

The requirements of the Supreme Command for steel and shipping were not so far out of line as their requirements for aircraft. In 1944 Japan had produced 4,652,000 tons of finished steel and for the fiscal year 1944, ending March 31, 1945, she built 1,590,000 tons of new shipping.²⁷ However, the tonnage newly built that year was equal only to 45 per cent of the amount sunk. This was perhaps the primary cause of Japan's defeat. In both ships and steel, however, Japan's capacity to produce was being rapidly reduced by Allied action on all fronts. This places the Supreme Command's requirements in a correct perspective.

The Planning Board was in the unfortunate habit of issuing any amount of promissory notes which it knew very well it could not honor. Faced again with the determined request of the Supreme Command, the cabinet met day after day until late at night. Finally Koiso gave in and assumed full responsibility for the measure of production asked by the Planning Board. In so doing he simply walked into a trap set by the Army. When production did not reach that goal, the Army could demand his resignation. Further-

24. J. B. Cohen, *Japan's Economy in War and Reconstruction* (University of Minnesota Press, 1949), p. 209, n. 19. (Ed.)

25. *Ibid.*, p. 210. (Ed.)

26. *Ibid.*, p. 226. (Ed.)

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 128 (Table 13), 267 (Table 32). (Ed.)

more, the Supreme Command could put the blame on the civil government in case of defeat, for had not the latter guaranteed the production required as the minimum for the successful prosecution of the war?

At about the same time GHQ began to show distress regarding the precarious position of French Indochina, and particularly about the possibility of an enemy landing there. Some measures of security had to be taken without delay. But the shortage of soldiers and ships made it extremely difficult. In addition to this, problems of the political parties at home began to assume alarming proportions. Right and left, grave difficulties cropped up daily for Koiso.

When the enemy penetrated into Lingayen Bay in the Philippines the Emperor asked Kido whether it had not become necessary to seek the views of the jushin on the war situation. Kido replied that it would be useful if the Emperor first summoned the two chiefs of staff and exchanged frank views with them. Then he might make inquiries of the cabinet ministers and, if it was deemed necessary in order to determine the highest national policy, hold an imperial conference of jushin and cabinet ministers together. This shows that Kido did not attach much importance to the advice of the jushin at that time. However, as the Emperor repeated his desire to send for them, Kido had to give serious thought to it. After consulting Marquis Tsuneo Matsudaira, minister of the imperial household, Kido arranged for the jushin to be received separately by the Emperor and submit their views on the current situation. Ostensibly, however, the audience was for the purpose of paying their respects to the Emperor and wishing him a happy New Year. These audiences extended over the whole month of February; Hiranuma was received on the 7th, Hirota on the 9th, Konoye on the 14th, Wakatsuki on the 19th, Okada on the 23d, and Tojo last of all, on the 26th. Count Makino was also sent for and saw the Emperor on February 19. Abe was away in Korea as governor general, and Yonai was serving in the cabinet as vice premier. All but Tojo expressed anxiety over the war. But none of them explicitly advised ending it.

On February 19 another American amphibious attack was launched against Iwo Island, only 630 miles from Tokyo. With the investment of this strategic island, the enemy embarked upon the

final phase of the offensive against our inner defense system. Fierce fighting raged on Iwo Jima for a month, causing the invaders more than 20,000 casualties, not including naval losses in the campaign. The island garrison of 23,000 died to a man, after putting up a very strong defense. Navy Secretary Forrestal was present during the landing operations and visited the island soon after its capture. He was deeply impressed with the ferocity of the fighting and is said at that time to have given thought to intensifying psychological warfare against Japan in order, if possible, to avoid a direct assault against the Japanese home islands.

When the alarming report of the landing on Iwo Jima reached Tokyo the Army, anticipating the inevitable, declared that it looked forward to the final chance of administering a fatal blow when the enemy sought to invade the home islands! The Supreme Command thus slapped the prime minister's face again by contradicting his previous public statements that the Philippines were the main battlefield. But as if to ridicule the Supreme Command, B-29's and carrier-based planes began to pay frequent visits to Tokyo and its vicinity. There was no resistance whatever off the coast or in the air, and people wondered what had become of our supposedly invincible fleet and efficient Air Force. In one of these raids several buildings in the palace compound were burned down. On February 24 the American flag was hoisted over battle-scarred Manila. Air raids on our main islands grew intense. On March 10 150 B-29's subjected Tokyo to a mass raid by night, concentrating on the most densely populated districts. Within a few hours 300,000 houses went up in flames and a million persons were rendered homeless overnight. One hundred thousand charred and mutilated corpses were strewn amid the smoking ruins. A few days later Osaka suffered a similar fate; 200,000 lost their homes in a single raid. Panic seized the people. A frantic and disorderly exodus from major cities took place. Chaos prevailed and public morale collapsed. The Diet was then in session, and though debates and discussions were muffled, its temper was rising against the cabinet. For, try as it might, the government could no longer conceal the realities of the situation. Yet the military attributed the defeats to the inadequate supply of airplanes, with implied censure for the people's failure to do their utmost to surmount the crisis.

The two fighting services had so far kept up a semblance of co-

operation in spite of their strained relations. But now they began to fall out, their quarrels aggravated by the unfortunate trend of the war. While the Army complained of the meager support tendered by the Navy, the latter protested that the Army, which took the lion's share of munitions and equipment, did not show enough mettle in resisting the invaders.

Relations between the Army and Navy were usually not cordial. They were rivals rather than cooperators. For a brief space of time, however, at the beginning of the Pacific war, the two services displayed a surprisingly happy spirit of cooperation, perhaps because the scope and atmosphere of the stupendous struggle awed them into harmonious collaboration. This phase came to an end when the joint plan of the initial offensives had been carried out by the occupation of the Malay Peninsula and the Dutch East Indies. Before the fall of Singapore early in 1942 the staff officers of Imperial General Headquarters met to plan another series of joint operations. Long acrimonious discussions extended over months but did not produce agreement. On the one hand the triumphant Navy demanded a swift attack to enlarge its conquests southward and isolate Australia. On the other hand the Army stressed the necessity of consolidating the occupied territories in order to exploit their resources and make them impregnable against counter-attacks.

Early in March, 1942, Imperial Headquarters had adopted as a compromise "a general plan for the future conduct of the war" which comprised the following six points: ²⁸

1. To aim at subjugating England first and then undermining America's will to fight. For this purpose, to endeavor to exploit the fruits of our initial victories and erect an impregnable defense, politically as well as militarily, to cope with a protracted war, devising further offensive strategies at an opportune moment.

2. To establish a self-supporting system and augment the nation's strength to prosecute the war by consolidating the occupied regions, securing the lines of communication, and exploiting the important resources required for our defense.

3. Detailed strategies for the conduct of the offensive to be worked out in due time in accordance with the progress of operations, development of the Russo-German war, the trend of relations between

²⁸ Source unavailable. (Ed.)

the Soviet Union and the United States, and the attitude of the Chungking regime.

4. As regards the Soviet Union, to continue the policy of preserving tranquillity in the north, endeavoring at the same time to prevent the strengthening of the ties between the Soviet Union on the one hand and Great Britain and the United States on the other.

5. To try through military pressure and political maneuvers to bring about the defection of the Chungking regime.

6. Policy toward Germany and Italy was decided upon prior to the outbreak of the war. This policy to remain unaltered, namely, that the three powers will cooperate in bringing about the speedy downfall of England and will, parallel with this, endeavor to undermine the morale of the United States.

The studied ambiguity of item 3 indicated the important fact that the two fighting services could not come to an agreement about strategy. The truth was that the Army had a plan of its own: so far the Pacific war had been mainly a naval affair in which the Army played the second fiddle. It should not be so in the future. With eyes on China and the Soviet Union, the continent-minded Army refused to follow the lead of the ocean-minded Navy. Thus at this very critical moment the two parted company. The result was that the Navy sailed on with but grudging support from the Army, to carry the offensive into the Solomon Sea, New Guinea, and Midway. Airplanes, the vital weapons in modern sea battles, were being divided on a 50-50 basis between the two services, as were most of the other weapons of war, and this caused deep resentment on the part of the Navy, which bore the main brunt of the fighting. The Army meanwhile was busy "taking walks," as the navy officers dubbed it, in the wilderness of China and Burma. In October, 1943, the Supreme Command shaped another "general plan for the future conduct of the war" which included the adjustment of strategic requirements to available material resources. At the end of that month as already stated, an imperial conference was held with a view to determine the over-all strategic plan and harmonize the conflicting interests of the two fighting services. But this did not bring about any happy solution. In the spring of 1944, when the American forces were attacking the Marshall Islands and our Navy was suffering a series of reverses, the Army was lavishly squandering men and materials in a vain

effort to reduce Imphal in Manipur. This unfortunate tendency to separate strategies was not rectified even in face of a major disaster. On the contrary, the two services drifted further and further apart.

As such mutual recriminations interfered with the efficient conduct of the war, a body of public opinion developed which demanded the amalgamation, or merger, of the two services into one. The Emperor was seriously concerned over this difficult question because of the explosive possibilities inherent in it; but it would be necessary to unify the armed forces in preparation for the termination of the war for which he was now silently but strenuously exerting himself. It was in the middle of March, 1945, that, at the instance of General Koiso, a special arrangement was made by imperial command for the prime minister to be present at the conference at GHQ in which hitherto only a limited number of highly qualified officers of the Imperial General Staff had been permitted to participate. GHQ, however, did not take Koiso seriously, showing but little respect for him. In their view he was, after all, but a snobbish, senile general on the reserve list without any influence whatever in the Army. Moreover, according to established usage the conduct of military affairs was no concern of the civil government but was left exclusively in the hands of the Supreme Command. In fact, Koiso's presence at the regular staff conferences was merely tolerated. The result was that his position quickly became untenable. To the growing discrepancy of views between the Army and Navy there was added the scandalous handling of the Chinese question. And above all, the disastrous defeats in the field caused mounting dissatisfaction among the general public.

When the American forces began landing operations in Okinawa on April 1 an army staff officer warned me in confidence that the invasion had occurred at least one month earlier than had been anticipated by the Imperial General Staff. Consequently, my informant said, the defense of the key island was quite vulnerable, our reserves in aircraft numbering only 1,300 army planes and 500 navy planes. The ground forces could not expect anything like adequate air protection, and without it the battle would be decided very quickly, perhaps in ten days or so. While our island garrison amounted to some 120,000, the invading forces were reported to

number 540,000; 318 warships and 1,139 auxiliary craft reputedly took part in the attack. Prior to the landing the island had been subjected to an intense bombardment for more than a week. On the morning of April 1 the Tenth Army assaulted the battered coast and by evening was reported to have established a beachhead manned by 50,000 troops. In three weeks' time two-thirds of the island was occupied.

If Okinawa were lost it would be a coup de grâce for us. Our situation would indeed be desperate. To retrieve it we would either have to annihilate the enemy fleet or to repel the invaders. Both were evidently impossible. Although our "suicide" planes attacked resolutely, causing considerable annoyance to the enemy, this did not materially alter the situation. It was becoming increasingly clear, therefore, that we had to organize an active peace party with a view to bringing about an early termination of the war.

Even in this predicament, however, Koiso clung to office and tried in vain to tide over the crisis by reconstructing the cabinet. He asked for an audience at which he told the Emperor, to the latter's deep embarrassment, that the cabinet could not carry on as it was; it must either resign or be re-formed. He wanted to choose one or other of the alternatives according to the pleasure of the Emperor. The latter was not in a position to give Koiso the desired guidance. Meanwhile Koiso tried once again to revert to active service and combine the War Office with the premiership. This attempt miscarried since he could not overcome the opposition of the Tojo group which still controlled the Army. Precisely at this time General Sugiyama, the war minister, was reassigned to the newly created General Defense Command of Japan, and General Anami, until recently in the Philippines, was put forward as his successor.²⁹ Rather than see another officer appointed to the War Office, Koiso decided to abandon his tottering cabinet.

The other contributory cause of Koiso's downfall was his China policy. Like all the generals who had seen service on the continent, Koiso flattered himself that he knew how to handle the China affair. He trusted neither Foreign Minister Shigemitsu nor the Foreign Office, which had often tried to frustrate the expansionist policy he supported. Koiso belonged to the ambitious type of

29. Gen. Korechika Anami committed suicide August 14, 1945, upon the surrender of Japan. USSBS, *Japan's Struggle to End the War*, p. 23. (Ed.)

soldier in politics who, as the reader has seen, was more than once allegedly involved in plots to overthrow governments which hesitated to embark upon a policy of adventure abroad.

Fully convinced that we were in a desperate situation, Koiso now attempted to retrieve it by settling our quarrel with China. Toward the middle of March, 1945, in response to Koiso's secret invitation, a certain Chinese named Miaoping³⁰ arrived in Tokyo from Shanghai. This man, of unsavory reputation, was supposedly a confidential emissary from Chiang Kai-shek entrusted with the delicate mission of exploring the possibilities of a separate peace with Japan. It was very doubtful whether he really enjoyed Chiang's confidence. Why should China, which had endured so much hardship for so many years, desire to seek a negotiated peace when her mortal enemy was on the verge of a military collapse? Even if she wanted to do so, how could she possibly arrange peace with us when she remained to such an extent under the influence of the United States? On the other hand it was said that Chiang wanted to save his country from the further devastation which would result from the landing of American forces on the China coast. For would not the Japanese forces fight bitterly and adopt a scorched-earth policy in order to resist the Americans? Moreover Chiang, anticipating a break with the Communists in the near future, was said to desire to save Japan from a ruinous defeat. Thus China and Japan, as two sisterly neighbors, could cooperate against the menace of the Soviet Union.

These were attractive but spacious arguments. Koiso fell an easy prey to the eloquence of the mysterious messenger. In dead earnest he proposed to the Supreme War Council disbanding the Japanese-sponsored Nanking regime and withdrawing our expeditionary forces after the conclusion of a truce. Chiang was to undertake not to "allow the American forces to land in China" when the truce was signed. This was utterly ridiculous. The council voted it down unanimously. Still Koiso carried on clandestine negotiations with the doubtful agent. He even took the matter to the throne and argued it out with the Emperor. When he had thus made a complete fool of himself he could but resign in despair and disillusionment.

On April 4 the Koiso cabinet died an ignominious death. We

30. Miao Ping? (Ed.) Executed by Chiang's government after the war.

sighed a sigh of relief. The nine and a half months of Koiso's tenure of office was a tragic interlude filled with worries and waste. Koiso was, so to speak, a snow man melting away into water under the rays of the sun. The sun was the rising sentiment of the people at large for peace—peace at any price.

IV

"Over My Lifeless Body"

I

IMMEDIATELY AFTER Koiso's resignation the Emperor entrusted Marquis Kido with the task of recommending a successor. Before consulting the jushin as was customary, however, Kido sent for the chiefs of the fighting services and discussed with them at length the prospects of the war. He did this with imperial permission, and because of the insistence of the outgoing prime minister on the inauguration of an "Imperial Headquarters cabinet." By this was meant a cabinet in which the prime minister would assume the power of the chiefs of staff to direct the conduct of the war. The chiefs of the General Staff professed optimism, although they were, they said, fully aware of the difficulties confronting them. They thought that the emergence of a powerful government would go a long way toward sustaining the morale of the people at home, who, under it, could continue to fight against overwhelming odds. They based their calculation on the assumption that as the enemy approached our main defenses they would not only meet stiffer resistance but also be farther removed from their own bases. This would make their lines of supply more vulnerable. They might even commit some serious blunder which could reverse the entire course of the war. In contrast, Admiral Yonai and General Sugiyama, outgoing ministers of the navy and of war respectively, were pessimistically inclined and favored an early termination of hostilities. The latter was the only high-ranking officer of the War Office to hold this view. All the others clamored for *guerre à outrance*.

Sugiyama said that he thought it within the bounds of possibility for the Soviet Union to work for a settlement of the war in the Far East after she had finished with Germany. Stalin might consult with Churchill and Roosevelt or he might even act independently of his allies to advise Japan to lay down her arms. We should pre-

pare, the general believed, to meet either possibility of Russian intervention to bring about a termination of hostilities.

Gen Sugiyama was generally looked upon as a good-natured, brainless, superannuated nonentity. He was commonly referred to by the younger officers by the unattractive nickname of *boya-Gen*, Gen the slow witted. Yet, of all the strutting and swaggering generals—and there were too many of them—Sugiyama the slow witted was the only one with the courage to face unpleasant realities. Of course he seldom disclosed his mind, being naturally fearful of possible complications. Nevertheless, he occasionally confided his secret thoughts to men closely associated with him, such as his trusted aide-de-camp. According to the latter, it seems that the Emperor when seeking military information at one time preferred to summon the war minister rather than the chief of the Army General Staff, whose duty it was to keep him informed. As a result there were a few in high circles who wanted to see Sugiyama give up the War Ministry even if this meant installing him as prime minister. However Sugiyama, as already stated, soon relinquished the War Office in order to assume the command of the Army for home defenses, a command which he shared with General Hata.

Kido must have felt rather baffled when he discovered the singular fact that while the chiefs of the General Staff were determined on a vigorous prosecution of the war the ministers of war and navy were more or less in favor of its speedy termination. It was in such circumstances and against such a background that Kido invited to a consultation in the palace six of the jushin and Adm. Baron Suzuki, who at that time was the president of the Privy Council.

This conference met at 5 P.M. on April 4, the day of Koiso's resignation. Its deliberations continued until 8 P.M. and resulted in the choice of Admiral Suzuki as the new prime minister. Tojo was the first to speak. He said he deplored frequent changes of cabinet during wartime. He wanted to make sure that the next cabinet would be the last one. He argued vehemently that before selecting the prime minister it was necessary to decide what policy the country should pursue. There were, he said, two schools of thought: one maintained that we should fight to a finish while the other held it folly to do so and preferred to conclude peace

quickly even though it might mean unconditional surrender. Until this vital question was settled, said Tojo in his pert manner, how could one proceed with the task of choosing a prime minister?

Like an echo, Baron Hiranuma hastened to support Tojo. Once the dreaded chief of the powerful secret police, Hiranuma was from 1924 to 1936 the president of the Kokuhonsha or National Foundation Society, an extremist organization of the right wing. He likes to talk in patriotic strains which are known to be his political stock in trade. It was very simple, said he. We had no choice but to fight it out. He was entirely opposed to the idea of suing for peace. His only thought, he said, was how to prosecute the war more vigorously. Hirota, the veteran diplomat, talked philosophically of the virtue of fortitude in times of adversity. To him it was only natural that there were ups and downs in the trend of the war. Countries now victorious had often sustained serious defeats. There was no reason for us to despair so easily. But it was urgently necessary to choose a powerful cabinet in order to rally the people.

Prince Konoye took exception to these remarks. He soberly reminded those present that the Supreme Command was not represented at the gathering. Without the advice of the Supreme Command no useful conclusion could be reached on the question of victory or defeat. Thereupon Baron Wakatsuki quietly observed that the task of the conference was to recommend a prime minister and not to decide on peace or war. From there on, however, the discussion assumed the form of a debate on that very issue: peace or war? Suzuki, for example, remarked that while Wakatsuki was quite correct regarding the duty of the conference, it was clear that we had to fight to the very end. Anyone who did not unreservedly subscribe to this view was, he said, utterly disqualified for the post of prime minister. In the light of events which took place later under his premiership this was a significant statement indeed. Kido spoke of the unstable conditions prevailing in the nation and said that the people at large were getting weary of war. This situation was a dangerous one, and unless the new cabinet enjoyed a large measure of public confidence things might take an ugly turn. There was, he said, a growing tendency among the people to criticize the Army more outspokenly.

Tojo was not a man to acquiesce in such views. In his opinion

this analysis of the situation cast unwarranted reflections on the impeccable prestige of the imperial Army. He was of a different mind. Since the course of the war was adverse, the mainland of Japan might be subjected to direct attacks at any time. In such a case home defense would play a paramount role. Consequently the Army should remain the controlling factor in the government. Accordingly he wished to recommend General Hata as the most suitable candidate for prime minister.

These arguments finally led to agreement on two conditions regarding a new prime minister: a) he should be a professional soldier; b) he should be free from past political involvements. The latter condition was suggested by Konoye and accepted by all present. However, even after these premises were agreed upon, Suzuki proposed Konoye as the best candidate. His idea was to install Konoye as prime minister and then ask the others to join his cabinet so that most of the jushin would be included in it. In other words, it was a sort of emergency national cabinet, an idea which was by no means unpopular among the people at this time. Konoye was as ever the favorite man of the hour. However, the prince reminded the old admiral that his proposal was contrary to the conditions accepted by all. Then, tactfully, Hiranuma proposed Suzuki. Others supported the motion, but Suzuki was appalled and declined the offer. He excused himself on account of his age and deafness. He also said that it was his firm determination not to have anything to do with politics, as he was convinced that whenever an officer stood at the helm the ship of state fared ill. His colleagues essayed to persuade the hesitant admiral to accept the office.

Only Tojo stood apart in these efforts. He persisted in his recommendation of General Hata. Kido opposed him, insisting that only a cabinet commanding genuine and generous support from the nation at large could cope with the aggravated situation, and thus implying that an army cabinet was altogether out of season. Very well, Tojo threateningly retorted, if the Army did not cooperate the new cabinet would collapse in a day. Asked whether the Army would really refuse to cooperate under the circumstances, Tojo sullenly replied in the affirmative. Thereupon Kido shrewdly remarked, not without a touch of irony, that there were even greater possibilities of the people withholding cooperation

from the Army, an Army which they were beginning to detest. Seeing that things were going too far, Admiral Okada interposed with a question addressed to Tojo: was not the Army responsible for the defense of the homeland? It was scandalous to hear that the Army would withhold support from a prime minister who enjoyed the confidence of His Majesty!

There the three hours' discussion ended, and quite in spite of himself Suzuki was recommended to the throne as Koiso's successor. At 10 P.M. Suzuki was received in an audience at which the Emperor commanded the aged admiral to form a cabinet. Two days later, on April 7, the investiture took place.

I heard it directly from Konoye that long before the jushin met in the palace to consider a successor to Koiso four senior jushin, Konoye, Okada, Wakatsuki, and Hiranuma, had agreed to recommend Admiral Suzuki for premier in case of a cabinet change. This is not at all surprising, as the Koiso cabinet had been tottering for some time before its final collapse. But it seems that the four were not necessarily of one mind in recommending Suzuki. Konoye chose Suzuki as a fit instrument of bringing about the termination of the war. This had, of course, the blessing of Kido, who collaborated closely with Konoye. In fact, I understand that before Suzuki's assumption of office Kido explained to him the gravity of the situation and hinted at the necessity of a reversal of the national policy. Okada and Wakatsuki were also in favor of peace. Thus three of the four seniors seemed prompted by more or less similar calculations. That leaves Hiranuma who, as is already known to the reader, persisted in favoring an energetic prosecution of the war. How, then, were these conflicting views reconciled? The answer is that Hiranuma simply took it for granted that Suzuki, a man of fervent loyalty to the throne, would never play the part of a mere Badoglio. In fact the admiral did, at the palace conference, speak firmly in support of the continuation of the war. Yet it was this same man, Admiral Suzuki, who as prime minister presided over the cabinet that finally accepted the Potsdam declaration. What is the explanation of this apparent contradiction?

The admiral is every inch a warrior, faithful to the samurai tradition, who would do anything for the sake of His Majesty. Thus, when given the command from the throne to form a cabinet he obeyed without more ado. Konoye and Kido, on the other hand,

were well acquainted with both Suzuki's unique character and the Emperor's inclination. They had reason to feel confident in their choice of a prime minister at this crucial moment in the history of the country.

2

Admiral Suzuki was eighty years old. As he entered No. 1 Nagatacho, the prime minister's official residence, the cherries were in full bloom. Sakura, the cherry blossom, has been the emblem of our national character from time immemorial. A classic poem goes:

If strangers seek to scan the soul of Japan—
Say—scenting morn's sunlit air
Blows the cherry wild and fair!

It is its ethereal beauty that we love, its readiness to depart life at nature's signal. Unlike the rose it does not cling to life, decaying on the stem. It was in this spirit that the old sailor dictated the radio address which he was to broadcast to the nation in the evening:

I, who am eighty years old, have tried all my life to serve the cause of the country. Having, however, so far taken no active part in politics, I consider myself utterly unfit for the office of prime minister. It is only because of the grave situation that I have accepted the imperial command. Now I stand at the head of the gallant nation, confident that though I fall at this my last post of service, all you people, a hundred million strong, will march forward over my lifeless body to overcome the unprecedented crisis that confronts our fatherland. . . .¹

Forty-one years before, Suzuki had taken part in the battle of the Sea of Japan in which Admiral Togo annihilated the mighty Russian fleet. As a commander of a destroyer flotilla in that engagement he distinguished himself by daring conduct. He managed to get so near to the enemy fleet that he could read a newspaper by the light of the searchlights from enemy ships. As a result his torpedoes were most effective. The young naval officer wanted then to die like the cherry blossom, a hero's death. He survived, and witnessed the rapid rise of Japan to a prominent posi-

1. Source unavailable. (Ed.)

tion in the community of nations. Now he was called upon to preside over the dissolution of the empire. Ironically, on the very day of his assumption of office in 1945 our fleet was wiped out completely in an engagement off Kyushu. Led by the battleship *Yamato*, the remnant of the combined fleet sailed out for the last time to challenge the enemy fleet off Okinawa. But before it reached the destined waters it was subjected to a mass air attack and all the units went down fighting. Japan was without a navy—and an admiral was the premier.

Precisely at this hour the Soviet Union denounced the neutrality pact upon which we had relied strongly for the preservation of tranquillity in the north. "When sorrows come, they come not single spies, but in battalions." This was a day of despair. Thus from the outset it fared ill with the Suzuki administration.

Watching the petals floating in the air, Suzuki thought he would be happy if he could end his life like the cherry blossoms. He was ever ready to sacrifice his life for the beloved sovereign whom he had loyally served for many years as a trusted grand chamberlain. On account of his liberal views Suzuki was marked for death at the time of the February 26 incident of 1936, when the troops led by misguided young officers broke out in insurrection. He received three serious bullet wounds. As he lay in a pool of blood, feigning death, a soldier pressed a gun to his neck to deliver a finishing blow. Suzuki's wife intervened, and the marauders departed without making sure their victim was dead. For a long time afterward the mark of the gun muzzle remained on his neck. On the day of his investiture Premier Suzuki had the impression that the old mark had reappeared—a strange foreboding. He was anticipating the possibility that he might one day be murdered by extremists when he dictated the words "over my lifeless body."

His broadcast, however, contained little that was new. Stressing the extreme gravity of the situation, the premier exhorted the nation to unite as one man and concentrate all effort on dealing the enemy a decisive and telling blow. History has taught us, he said, that great nations do not always win, nor do small nations invariably lose, but whenever a small state has defeated a larger nation it has been by holding out to the last.

It was understandable that Suzuki could not publicly declare at this time his intention to seek the termination of hostilities at an

early date. The enemy powers, however, were welcoming his appointment as an indication of the gradual emergence of the peace party in Japan. From this point of view the broadcast was rather unfortunate, since it emphasized our determination to fight and did not contain even a veiled hint of our desire to seek peace. This, perhaps, was largely due to the still dominant influence of the war party which controlled the cabinet secretariat. But it was also a fact that the pursuit of peace was not yet sufficiently crystallized as an objective in Suzuki's mind.

3

Although the jushin were regularly consulted whenever a cabinet change took place, they seldom met together otherwise. Konoye and Okada, the leading jushin, both often complained to me that their activities were very much hampered by lack of current information from the government. These two, however, possessed private channels of information, and compared to them the other jushin were far less initiated in affairs of state. Toward the end of the Tojo administration, therefore, I proposed to Konoye that the jushin should meet together occasionally to exchange views and should invite government officials, such as the foreign minister, to inform them concerning the general situation. This advice was followed and they began to meet every two weeks regularly at Konoye's private residence in the outskirts of Tokyo. At these informal private gatherings questions of peace and war were freely discussed. Most of these meetings were desultory chats; yet they contributed to the creation of an esprit de corps among the jushin and thus created a subtle political atmosphere which helped to engender a movement for peace.

Although references have been made to some of them in the preceding pages, it may not be irrelevant here to describe the personalities of the jushin briefly and to mention some of the outstanding events that concerned them.

Adm. Keisuke Okada was the most influential figure in the Navy. He served as premier from 1934 to 1936, succeeding Admiral Saito. He is highly intelligent, an astute statesman and a shrewd observer, with an astounding power of memory. I once took him to see Mr. Keenan, chief prosecutor of the Tokyo trial

of war criminals, and Okada gave him a detailed and graphic account of the February 26 incident. The vigor and agility of his mind are remarkable for a man over eighty years of age. He is excessively fond of drinking, but is also possessed of a sense of humor which he can use with telling effect. His narrow escape from death at the time of the February 26 incident has already been described.

At the time of that incident Konoye was generally regarded as a bright star on the political horizon. A scion of a noble family, tall and handsome, he was an exceedingly charming man. His favorite author was Oscar Wilde and his favorite character Dorian Gray. He had a bit of the playboy in him and was a favorite of society ladies. Yet he was endowed with a rare intelligence and was extremely broad-minded and quick of understanding. When the February 26 incident resulted in the cabinet's fall, Konoye was recommended as a successor to Okada. He declined, however, and Hirota, foreign minister in the Okada cabinet, was appointed.

Koki Hirota was a veteran career diplomat and was considered an expert on Russian affairs. Despite his connection with the nationalistic Genyosha or Black Ocean Association, he labored to restore cordial relations with foreign countries, particularly the United States and Great Britain. When he became premier Ambassador Grew welcomed him as a safe and strong man, saying, "If I had had the pick myself, I know of nobody whom I would have more gladly chosen to head the government, with American interests in view."² This I think is a considerable tribute. I served as an interpreter for him while he was foreign minister and premier, and therefore may claim to know something of him. Affable and amiable, he was a past master in the art of conversation. His mind was oriental and his manner occidental, a happy combination which added to his charm. Even in his diplomatic interviews he often spoke in parables of the Chinese kind, which lent a peculiar flavor to his conversation. But that sometimes gave me difficult moments. In the midst of serious conversation he would suddenly mention such animals as the unicorn or porcupine or, still worse, would interject a phrase or two from the Chinese classics. I knew very few who did not succumb to the charm of his witty conversation. At one time he enjoyed vast prestige and popularity among

2. *Ten Years in Japan*, p. 178. But see n. 9, p. 34 above. (Ed.)

the people but in later years it somehow waned considerably.

General Hayashi, who succeeded Hirota in 1937, is now dead. He was reputedly a willing tool of the Army—an empty sheath, so to speak. He was completely out of touch with the people and greatly amused the nation by his plea for the revival of a sort of theocratic government. His fame rested on his quick decision to move the troops from Korea to Manchuria in 1931 in disregard of Baron Shidehara's opposition. Actually, however, it seems that he wavered a great deal before taking this step. His cabinet was a stopgap administration that lasted only three months.

At last Prince Fumimaro Konoye was harnessed into service, and the Konoye cabinet was inaugurated in June, 1937. Hardly was Konoye installed in office, however, than the China incident occurred, which quickly developed into a major war. Konoye tried earnestly and constantly to settle the incident by diplomatic means. But such efforts were doomed to failure. As already explained, the military embarked upon an expansionist policy abroad in order to enforce a reformist plan at home. The Army deliberately created international complications in order to consolidate its position at home. It was thus clearly impossible to solve the China incident by diplomacy. The root cause lay within the country. So long as the Army exercised a dominant influence in Japan there was no possibility of reversing the policy of adventure and aggression.³

Baron Kiichiro Hiranuma replaced Konoye in January, 1939. He was a leading member of the Privy Council and for many years had exerted a subtle influence upon successive governments. Hiranuma has the sharp mind of a successful prosecutor. He is well known for his nationalistic leanings and is notorious for his association with superpatriotic societies. On this account Prince Saionji held a distrust for him which had proved a serious obstacle to the realization of Hiranuma's lifelong ambition to become premier. Hiranuma was faced with the complex issue of the Axis alliance, but before his cabinet reached a final decision the nonag-

3. "Konoye has been labeled at various times radical, moderate, totalitarian. He . . . would seem to have been fundamentally nationalistic, whatever his temporary political attitude. He was considered friendly to the United States. . . . Prince Konoye also enjoyed close connection with some of the more extreme patriotic societies." He committed suicide in December, 1945 (probably to avoid arrest and trial as a war criminal—ed.). USSBS, *Japan's Struggle to End the War*, p. 28. (Ed.)

gression pact was concluded between Germany and the Soviet Union.

This forced his cabinet out of office. That was in August, 1939.⁴

There is little to be said about Gen. Nobuyuki Abe, who succeeded Hiranuma and carried on until January, 1940.⁵ He was followed by Yonai.

Adm. Mitsumasa Yonai, who died recently, was a typical naval officer, affable though reticent. A charming personality, with unassuming manners, he enjoyed a wide popularity within and without navy circles. Unlike most warriors he was internationally minded and his sober judgment in times of storm and stress testified to the broadness of his vision. Moreover, he possessed an ample supply of common sense which often stood him in good stead. Yonai's cabinet fell because he consistently opposed the Army's demand for entry into an alliance with Germany.⁶

Baron Reijiro Wakatsuki, a man of confirmed liberal opinion, is a much older man than Konoye, having been born in the last year of the American Civil War.⁷ He is considered a leading expert on finance. Wakatsuki was the principal delegate at the London Naval Conference of 1930 which applied the 5-5-3 ratio to auxiliary craft. He was largely instrumental in bringing about the naval accord. This allegedly insufficient ratio, however, created an uproar in the Navy, and the Naval General Staff as a result refused to undertake the responsibility for national defense. The Hamaguchi cabinet, disregarding this, concluded the treaty in the face of the fiery protests of the younger officers of the fleet, who accused the government of infringing the so-called prerogatives of the Supreme Command.

As already explained, this incident was largely responsible for the series of disturbances which took place in subsequent years. Largely because of this treaty the political parties were accused of misgovernment. The Manchurian intervention was engineered mainly by the younger officers and extremists who had been enraged by the naval limitations agreement. Wakatsuki, who succeeded Hamaguchi upon the latter's assassination, was then the prime minister. His cabinet tried vainly to oppose the military, and

4. See n. 11, p. 38. (Ed.)

5. See n. 9, p. 80. (Ed.)

6. See n. 14, p. 39. (Ed.)

7. See n. 11, p. 80. (Ed.)

finally fell as a result. Event followed event with great rapidity, culminating in the February 26 incident.

The jushin, having no official status, had no right to participate in the State Council nor had they any access to official archives. What information they possessed was acquired privately and often, as it happened, illegally. Yet they enjoyed considerable political prestige and at times were capable of exercising powerful influence upon the government of the day. Their position was anomalous and yet unique. I tried, therefore, to prevail upon Kido, the lord privy seal, to make an arrangement which would give the senior jushin some official status as advisers to the throne; but Kido hesitated to do so, avowedly on account of certain technical difficulties. Shigemitsu's efforts in the same direction, as the reader is aware, did not bear fruit. So, to the end of the war, the jushin remained a peculiar institution. They were like the dummy supposed to be watching the intricate card game in silence and yet, one cannot say how, exerting a subtle influence upon the players.

4

It took fully two days for Suzuki to complete the selection of his cabinet colleagues, fifteen in all. Okada became his chief adviser in the task. Before that Baron Hiranuma seems to have tried to recommend his own men to Suzuki, but fortunately his influence was soon eliminated. Neither Suzuki nor, for that matter, Okada, showed any conscious effort to recruit ministers from among men who favored an early peace.

There was some speculation about the choice of the foreign minister. It was generally expected that Shigemitsu would be retained in this post from the Koiso cabinet, but Suzuki's choice fell upon Togo, who had been foreign minister in the Tojo cabinet.⁸ Late in the evening of April 7 Togo, in response to a summons from the prime minister, hastened down to Tokyo from Karuizawa, a summer resort several hours away. I saw Togo immediately after his midnight interview with Suzuki. Before we parted company at 3 A.M. we discussed thoroughly all phases of

8. Shigenori Togo had been war minister at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack. He was arrested as a war criminal after the Allied occupation of Japan, convicted, and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment. *New York Times* (November 12, 1948), p. 1. (Ed.)

the war situation. Togo hesitated to accept the proffered portfolio, but I tried to persuade him, describing at length the realities of the situation as I knew them. Togo knew that I had been very active in trying to help terminate the war, a war which, we both agreed, had been recklessly commenced and was now irrevocably lost.

Togo told me that when he asked the prime minister's views about the prospects of the war Suzuki replied he felt we could carry on for two or three years more. Togo in turn observed that since modern war was a war of attrition fought on a total scale the supply of war material was decisive. Judged from this point only, our position was rapidly becoming untenable. He rather feared, Togo said, that it was impossible to continue fighting even for another year. As wide discrepancies appeared to exist between his views and those of the prime minister, he doubted whether mutual cooperation could develop between them. Consequently he felt obliged to decline the offer.

It was only due to the friendly pressure brought to bear upon him by such men as Okada and Kido that Togo's reluctance was finally overcome. Togo's friends urged him to join the government in order to enlighten the aged prime minister from within the cabinet. In their opinion Suzuki's views upon the war were not necessarily rigidly fixed. As a result Togo met Suzuki again two days later and stressed the urgent necessity of terminating the war speedily. As the prime minister finally concurred in this view, Togo could no longer resist the pressure and he reluctantly accepted the post of foreign minister.

The circumstances attending the appointment of Togo as foreign minister are not without significance. They show clearly that the prime minister, until recently the president of the Privy Council, was unacquainted with the current military situation. This was, to say the least, a serious handicap at a time of unprecedented crisis. However the fact that the prime minister, unlike his predecessor, was entirely free from prejudices was a considerable advantage to the cause of peace. In this connection, the choice of Togo as foreign minister was a stroke of good fortune, since he was thoroughly convinced of the necessity of bringing about an early termination of hostilities. Indeed the difficulties of ending the war were surmounted largely through his unsparing efforts, brilliantly

supported by Kido who, in turn, drew inspiration directly from the throne.

Togo, incidentally, sought my counsel whenever he came to Tokyo. I supplied him with confidential information, knowing that he would use it wisely. When Togo became foreign minister I congratulated myself for having kept him informed in spite of the risk of transmitting confidential material.

Togo is a very firm man. He persists in his settled convictions with an adamant will. Once he is convinced of the righteousness of his course, he fights it out to the very end even when the odds are one in a million. That is his strong, as well as his weak, point. In addition he is straightforward to a fault. This, I think, helps explain his unpopularity. It is a case of *bon avocat, mauvais voisin*. When negotiations with Germany were under way, he surprised his colleagues by dispatching from Moscow a strong plea to the government against the alliance. He was then a highly successful ambassador to the Kremlin where he was well liked. With Tokyo already determined on the Axis alliance, only he and Shigemitsu in London raised any objection. At that time to object was to court the disfavor of the home government and invite disaster. This episode proves Togo to possess vision as well as courage. It was very unfortunate that he had served as foreign minister under Tojo, but having shared the responsibility of commencing the war, Togo, once again foreign minister, was now fully determined to end it. There was something verging on tragic heroism in his resolution to face this struggle upon which he was staking his life.

5

Meanwhile things were moving fast in Europe. Although the brief Rundstedt offensive of December, 1944, achieved some success, the general situation for Germany was clearly beyond repair. The structure of the proud Nazi regime and the might of the once invincible German Army were now fast crumbling. The end of January, 1945, found the Red Army under Marshal Zhukov sweeping to within seventy miles of Berlin where Dr. Ley declared that the capital would be defended to the last man. The Volkswehr or citizens' army, he said, was determined to fight "in front of, within and in the rear of the city." In Berlin barricades were be-

ing hastily erected by the Volkssturm (citizens' storm troops). Women as well as prisoners of war were mobilized. There was no sign of a panic but neither was there any show of enthusiasm; the people went about their work with the customary mechanical diligence. Even then the Berliners' sardonic wit did not fail them. Berlin, they said, will fall to the Red Army in one hour and two minutes. For an hour the Russians will look with wonder at these barricades but they will take only two minutes to overrun them!

In early March Cologne fell to the Allied forces advancing from the west. Within a month Königsberg and Vienna were occupied by the Red Army marching from the east. On April 25 Russian forces established contact at Torgau with the American Army, cutting Germany into halves. On the 26th the Allied radio announced Himmler's offer to unconditional surrender to Great Britain and the United States. Like a giant tree falling to the ax, Germany suddenly collapsed.

Count Bernadotte, the nephew of King Gustav V of Sweden, according to his memoirs met Himmler in secret at the local branch of the Swedish legation in Lübeck on the night of April 23.⁹ The two sat across a table lit by candles; the electricity had been cut by the air raid which drove them to the underground shelter for safety. At this midnight interview Himmler, who was then commander in chief of the German forces, requested the count to ask the Swedish foreign minister to inform the Western Allies of Himmler's proposal to surrender the German forces to Britain and the United States. Himmler said he was prepared to lay down arms in the west but that he was determined to fight on in the east. He added that this would "enable the Western Allies to advance rapidly on the east."

On the evening of April 24 Count Bernadotte conferred in Stockholm with the prime minister and foreign minister of Sweden. Later that night the ministers of Great Britain and the United States to Sweden were summoned for consultation. On April 26 the Swedish Foreign Office received a reply from the American government refusing to consider Himmler's proposal "unless it included the Soviet Union as well."

Himmler is said to have flown into a rage when the allies broadcast the news of his abortive attempt at partial surrender. Evidently

9. Count Folke Bernadotte, *The Curtain Falls* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), pp. 110-111.

this was extremely embarrassing for him. Himmler had said on April 23 that Hitler was already dead or was about to die and that hence he was at last free to take action in the matter of surrender. The Allies' disclosure of his action and their rejection of his offer actually obliged him, it seems, to withdraw himself as successor to the Führer. This was witnessed by the fact that on May 1 Admiral Doenitz was appointed in his place. It was Himmler's desire to negotiate in person with General Eisenhower for the surrender, but this now became impossible.

President Roosevelt himself did not live to see the Allied armies march into Berlin. On April 12 at Warm Springs, Georgia, he died quite suddenly of a cerebral hemorrhage. "F.D.R. dead" we heard in the first news flash at 5:47 P.M. We could well imagine the sorrow throughout the United States. Strange though it may seem, there was little or no rejoicing on the part of the Japanese. There was, on the contrary, genuine sympathy for the bereaved nation. A great leader had passed away and it was fitting to mourn the irreparable loss even though he happened to be the commander in chief of our mighty enemy. I suggested to the foreign minister that our broadcast to the United States should include suitable condolences. The Emperor was also advised to do likewise through Switzerland.

I once chatted with the late president when he was governor of New York. He told me that there was one thing for which he envied Theodore Roosevelt, that is, his mediation in the Russo-Japanese War. He would be very happy, he said, if he could ever serve the cause of civilization as a mediator for peace. I was impressed by the pleasant personality of the governor, who appeared to me to be better deserving of the title "happy warrior" than was his hapless friend Al Smith. Years later, in 1941, during the diplomatic negotiations between Japan and the United States, F.D.R. suggested that he might act as an intermediary in the dispute between Japan and China. At that time I recalled anew his previous remarks to me. The thought of peace, I understood, was ever uppermost in his mind.

"Our earth is but a small star in the great universe. Yet of it we can make, if we choose, a planet untroubled by war, untroubled by hunger or fear, undivided by senseless distinctions of race, color, or theory. Grant us that courage and foreseeing to begin this task

today that our children and our children's children may be proud of the name of Man." Thus he wrote in an address delivered June, 14, 1942.¹⁰

In a sense F.D.R. was a superman, and so his act was a hard one to follow, to borrow the expression from show business. When Mr. Truman was installed in the White House scarcely anyone in Japan knew who he was. As the Emperor wanted to have particulars concerning him we consulted the *Congressional Directory* and hurriedly put together what information we could gather—which was rather little.

Within three weeks of F.D.R.'s death another man succumbed to fate. That was Hitler. His death, supposed to have occurred on May 1, was the finale of the desperate struggle of Nazi Germany to dominate Europe. I had met Hitler at the zenith of his power in early 1941, when he was attended by all the pomp of a Roman conqueror. He was adored and worshiped by the German people, who considered him the symbol of their greatness. Yet somehow he did not impress me as Churchill and Stalin did. There was something artificial or even deceptive in the awkward showmanship of Nazi propaganda. Hitler, however, personified the wild fantasies of the German masses and with his defeat their hopes were dashed to pieces. Poor German people, so utterly disillusioned! At any rate, the death of President Roosevelt and of the Führer, occurring in such quick succession, seemed to suggest that the great drama was now nearing its end.

It was late in the evening of April 28, 1945, that we received through the BBC the first news of the German surrender. Although for some time we had been expecting the worst, we were still shocked. Speculation was rife as accurate reports were completely lacking. Togo was away, having traveled to the Grand Shrine of Ise to report his assumption of office. He hurried back to Tokyo by airplane to attend an emergency cabinet meeting. The Supreme War Council met on April 30 and formally approved a decision to continue the war in spite of the defeat of Germany. On May 3 Prime Minister Suzuki stated in a broadcast that the course of the war in Europe "has in no respect been unexpected on our part. . . . We Japanese must renew our de-

10. *The War Messages of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (The United States of America), p. 44.

termination."¹¹ He also said that our war aim was to secure our self-existence, and that Japan's integrity and the liberation of East Asia were inherently one and the same. This was an appeal to those nations of the western Pacific which were legally our allies to continue their cooperation with us. For it was apparent that these allies were gravely shocked by the German capitulation and were growing apprehensive as to the possible consequences of further collaboration with Japan.

We had become aware before this of the Germans' desire to surrender only to Great Britain and the United States and to continue war against the Soviet Union. This seemed to us quite impossible under the prevailing circumstances, but whether possible or not it put us in an extremely embarrassing position. Germany was suing for peace with Great Britain and the United States while we were still at war with them. She wished to continue hostilities with the Soviet Union, with whom we were still at peace. Our position in the Axis alliance had, indeed, become entirely untenable. On May 6 Togo issued the following statement releasing Japan from the obligations stipulated in the Tripartite Pact:

Because information concerning the recent German situation is of enemy origin, some of it carries propagandistic coloring and some reports are contradictory. But all are almost agreed in reporting on the proposal of surrender to Britain and America made by Heinrich Himmler, commander in chief of the German Reserve Army, and on the broadcast made to the German people by Adm. Karl Doenitz at the time of the assumption of his post, in which he stressed only the continuation of the war against the Soviet Union and declared that Germany would have to fight with Britain and America also as long as they obstructed Germany's war against the Soviet. If such is the German attitude, it means that Germany is principally concerned with the war against the Soviet and desires peace with Britain and America. It is, therefore, difficult to recognize that Germany, after the death of the Führer, is taking action in consonance with the Tripartite Pact, which pledges the prosecution of a common war against Britain and America.

In such circumstances, it would be natural for Japan to retain freedom of action in respect to the Tripartite Pact and various other political agreements between Japan and Germany.

But whatever the attitude of Germany, it will have no effect on

11. *New York Times* (May 4, 1945), p. 10.

Japan's resolve to prosecute the war successfully against the United States and Great Britain.¹²

At one minute past midnight on May 8 the German capitulation came into force. This day was designated as V-E day and was made memorable by the victory announcement of Prime Minister Churchill and President Truman. As I listened to the San Francisco broadcast, my heart sank. Churchill's voice came booming over the air:

. . . We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing, but let us not forget for a moment the trial and efforts that lie ahead.

Japan with all her treachery and greed, remains unsubdued. . . .

We must now devote all our strength and resources to the completion of our task both at home and abroad.¹³

Churchill was followed by Truman, who said:

This is a solemn but a glorious hour. I only wish that Franklin D. Roosevelt had lived to witness this day.

General Eisenhower informs me that the forces of Germany have surrendered to the United Nations. The flags of freedom fly all over Europe.

Our rejoicing is sobered and subdued by a supreme consciousness of the terrible price we have paid to rid the world of Hitler and his evil band. Let us not forget. . . .

We can repay the debt which we owe to our God, to our dead and to our children only by work—by the ceaseless devotion to the responsibilities which lie ahead of us. If I could give you a single watchword for the coming months, that word is—work, work, and more work.

We must work to finish the war. Our victory is but half won. The West is free, but the East is still in bondage to the treacherous tyranny of the Japanese. . . .

We must work to bind up the wounds of a suffering world—to build an abiding peace, a peace rooted in justice and in law. We can build such a peace only by hard, toilsome, painstaking work—by understanding and working with our allies in peace as we have in war.

The job ahead is no less important, no less urgent, no less difficult than the task which now happily is done.

I call upon every American to stick to his post until the last battle

12. Source unavailable. (Ed.)

13. *New York Times* (May 9, 1945), p. 8.

is won. Until that day, let no man abandon his post or slacken his effort.¹⁴

We were now alone—absolutely alone. Deserted by our European allies, we had singlehanded to fight two of the most powerful nations on earth.

Next day, May 9, our government issued an official statement clarifying its position: "The surrender of Germany which had pledged to fight as one with Japan is indeed very regrettable. Our war aims are based upon self-existence and self-defense. This being the unshakeable faith of Japan, the swift change in the European situation will not cause the slightest change."¹⁵

The defeat of Germany once again proved conclusively Mahan's theory that ultimate victory belongs to the power which enjoys command of the sea. The German Navy was no equal of the British Navy. Even with her efficient fleet of U-boats Germany could not challenge the combined sea power of Great Britain and the United States. Although modern war is three dimensional, fought on land, sea, and in the air, sea power still remains a decisive factor. This was particularly true in our war which was being fought across the wide expanse of the Pacific Ocean. From the outset it was a naval struggle. And yet we no longer possessed a navy.

How then could we continue to fight?

I often hear it asked: why did not Japan lay down her arms at the time of the German surrender? The answer is that we could not. The domineering militarists were still directing our national destiny at their pleasure, and they stubbornly refused to entertain for a moment the thought of giving up the struggle. Yet it was unmistakably clear that even their confidence was being rapidly undermined. Germany was gone, and gone forever the German dream of glittering conquests. How could Japan, already forced to the wall, hope to escape utter defeat and destruction now that Great Britain and the United States, set free from their European preoccupations, could concentrate upon us their combined might? It was only common sense that continuing the war would be entirely futile. Yet the military wanted to carry on. The military position was indeed desperate. The leaders of the armed forces, how-

14. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

15. Source unavailable. (Ed.)

ever, could not now withdraw the repeated assurances of ultimate victory with which they had for years lavishly fed the gullible nation. Although defeat stared them in the face, or rather because of this fact, they frantically exhorted the people to brace themselves for the final struggle. If they themselves were to perish, the nation might as well perish with them.

It is of considerable interest to discover that early in 1944 (actually on January 6) Kido had noted in his diary the possibility of seeking peace if and when Germany should collapse. I recall that at that time Kido instructed Matsudaira, his secretary, to discuss this possibility with me. Warned by us, Kido grew increasingly apprehensive about the German situation. He soon became convinced of the necessity of preparing for an eventual German surrender. The entry in his diary is as follows:

We must first consider whether or not we should seek the termination of the war simultaneously with the unconditional surrender of Germany. It goes without question that Japan must act solely by her own judgment according to the situation then prevailing. As it is, however, obvious that the enemy powers will intensify their propaganda efforts, we must guard against the activities of Badoglios who will surely emerge out of the confusion. In such an eventuality the continuation of the Tojo cabinet will become rather difficult. If it falls, it is, I think, open to question whether the usual procedure of recommending a new prime minister at the jushin conference is sufficient. If things came to such a pass, would it not be better to ask the jushin to settle first the basic foreign policy of the country and then designate a prime minister capable of carrying out such a policy? This point requires further consideration. Unless we made wide concessions we could not, in all probability, succeed in terminating the war. Since, however, we were obliged to resort to war in order to free ourselves from the chains of the so-called ABCD (American-British-Chinese-Dutch) encirclement, if we obtained satisfaction in this regard we might give up the struggle. With this in mind, I suppose the following five points might serve as a basis of negotiations:

1. The problem of the Pacific region shall be settled by the nations of the Pacific basin.
2. There shall be established a mixed commission of Japan, the Soviet Union, China, the United States, and Great Britain.
3. The regions under our occupation and the islands in the Pacific shall be demilitarized.

4. The countries other than the principal powers in this region shall become permanently neutral states, while the occupied regions shall be administered by the mixed commission.

5. The economic policy for this region shall observe the principles of the open door and equal opportunity.

Obviously the most important question is when and how such terms should be proposed. It would seem wiser not to make it simultaneous with the German surrender. I should, however, think it necessary to make the proposal before the United States and Great Britain began to attack us in full force with their combined strength. Perhaps it would be wiser to ask the mediation of the Soviet Union. The above may seem too soft or weak-kneed but in the light of the present world situation and in particular the overwhelming power of the United States and the Soviet Union in contrast to the quick depletion of our national resources, I believe this country must abide time for at least a century fostering strength. If I am not mistaken, the worst calamity that could fall on this nation is to be isolated and subjected to attack by all the powerful nations of the world. Therefore it follows that we had better seek the termination of hostilities by aligning ourselves with the Soviet Union and China who are oriental in their outlook.¹⁶

Kido states that he had sought the advice of Shigemitsu who told him that a very serious determination was necessary in order to end the war since "substantially unconditional surrender was unavoidable."

This entry deserves attention because it possesses a direct bearing upon the negotiations we later tried to initiate with the Soviet government prior to our surrender.

War with the United States and Great Britain had been forced upon the helpless, if apathetic, nation by the militarists. Before the fighting services decided upon the war, which was strongly opposed by the Foreign Office, the latter asked the Supreme Command if it honestly believed there were any chances of success in this unwarranted adventure. The Supreme Command made a significant, if somewhat sinister, reply to the effect that although they knew they could not overwhelm powerful enemies, particularly the United States, they were also confident of being unvanquishable. Is it not a supreme folly then, the Foreign Office asked, to embark upon war without being sure of ultimate victory? The arguments of the Foreign Office served no useful purpose,

16. Source unavailable. (Ed.)

however, since the militarists were fully and firmly determined to resort to war. Finally, after much discussion, a plan was adopted for terminating hostilities. This was largely through the insistence of the Foreign Office, which maintained that if one commenced war one had to have a policy to terminate it. We obviously could not fight on indefinitely. The policy then formulated by the Supreme Command was in substance as follows:

1. First, we should establish an impregnable defense ring around the areas to be occupied during the initial stage of the war, and parallel to this should seek a speedy settlement of the China affair.

2. Second, we should bring pressure to bear upon England in order to secure her early capitulation.

3. Third, we should thus isolate the United States, and consequently induce her to abandon her war efforts and accept a peace by compromise.

This, in short, meant that our Supreme Command was confident of early success and planned to exploit this success to the utmost by making our defense positions secure before the United States could muster her massive strength in counteroffensives. Since England was at that time in dire straits, it was natural to choose her as the first victim and to concentrate our attacks upon her. Evidently, however, Japan could not deal direct and effective blows against England except by attacking her extensive lines of imperial communications. Otherwise the job was largely left to Germany. Japan counted heavily upon Germany to make short work of England, which most of our people mistakenly regarded as the center of a rapidly decaying empire. For the Foreign Office, however, the important point was that the military conceded the necessity, or at least the desirability, of an eventual peace through negotiation.

In March, 1942, soon after our seizure of Singapore, the Supreme Command took stock of the prevailing military situation. The initial onslaughts had reaped far greater spoils at smaller cost than had been expected, for which General Headquarters naturally took credit. Germany was also at the height of her military career. It seemed as if the Hakenkreuz and the Rising Sun were destined to meet at the Persian Gulf. England seemed on the verge

of collapse and the United States was still nursing the wounds of Pearl Harbor. The Axis was triumphant.

At that point our much elated staff conferences decided on the line of defense to be held at all cost in the event of counteroffensives from America. The easternmost strongholds in this line were to be the Marshall and Caroline islands. This line was to be fortified strongly in order to make the occupied regions absolutely impenetrable by the enemy. In this our strategists were, however, to be severely disillusioned. Contrary to their calculations, our outer defenses collapsed at the first shock of the American counter-offensives, which came surprisingly soon.

As for reducing England, the role was exactly reversed. Germany was conquered by instead of conquering England. The first two features in the plan of the Supreme Command had completely failed to develop. It was now quite clear that we could no longer hope the United States, forging ahead as she was, would cease her war efforts. Reason therefore dictated that when Germany capitulated we should discontinue hostilities at once. The military mind, however, showed but scant respect for reason. Only a miracle could change it. The military merely proceeded to shelve and ignore their previous formula for terminating the war. The German defeat, they maintained, had nothing to do with our war, the object of which was the defense of our fatherland against the now imminent hostile invasion. Already our mainland was being subjected to the terror and fury of incessant air attacks, which doubtless were precursors of a large-scale landing operation. Since things had come to this pass, the military leaders contended, we had no choice but to redouble our war efforts. In other words, the war aims had undergone a basic change: while in the beginning the stake was an overseas empire, we were now fighting for the very existence of Japan as an independent nation. The dream of wide colonial conquests vanished suddenly. The powerful enemy was closing in on us from all directions. It was a case of Hannibal *ad portas*. Yet when Hannibal stood at the gates of Rome the Roman Senate went quietly about the work of repairing the military fortunes of the city. As W. W. Fowler writes, the overwhelming defeats sustained by the Roman legions did but lead the Romans to victory, "a victory of all the nobler elements in their character

over momentary doubt and despair.”¹⁷ Such was not the case with us. We possessed neither Rome’s fortitude nor her discipline. Nor were our military leaders of the Roman fiber.

17. *Rome* (Henry Holt & Co., 1912), p. 104.

Spears against Superfortresses

OUR EMPIRE BUILDERS dreamed of establishing the so-called co-prosperity sphere in East Asia embracing the region between the western borders of Burma and the easternmost of the Marshall and Gilbert islands. Its southern boundary was to run just north of the continent of Australia. This vast region was to be occupied and developed as a source of the principal raw materials of war, such as oil, iron ore, copper, zinc, bauxite, etc. In December, 1941, it was clear that available stocks of these essential commodities would be exhausted in less than two years' time. We therefore considered it imperative to seize the territories from which an adequate supply could be guaranteed for the future. Our ability to continue the war depended upon a continuing supply of these critical commodities. And our economic strategy was, from the very first, based upon the assumption that we were absolutely certain to gain control of the territories where these materials existed, as well as to maintain the security of the lines of communication to the newly conquered territories.

When Japan embarked upon the war, there were two most vulnerable spots in her thin armor. These were shipping and oil.

As regards ships, Japan possessed about 6,000,000 gross tons of vessels of over 500 tons gross weight.¹ Of this total the Army and the Navy respectively requisitioned 2,150,000 tons and 1,556,600 tons as transport ships, leaving only 1,714,543 tons for civilian use.² It meant that this meager 1,714,543 tons of shipping was all we had for transporting important raw materials from distant overseas regions. The Cabinet Planning Board was headed by the influential and ambitious General Suzuki, who was largely responsible for the rising influence of the Army in politics in recent years. This board maintained that 3,000,000 tons were constantly

1. USSBS, *Summary Report (Pacific War)*, p. 11. (Ed.)

2. USSBS, *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on Japan's War Economy*, p. 176, Table C-99. (Ed.)

required as a bare minimum for this purpose. However, the Supreme Command refused to cut its holdings, pleading urgent military necessity. This was its favorite plea which no one dared or was allowed to dispute.

In war one must be prepared to lose ships through enemy action and by accidents. The probable losses were estimated at 800,000–1,100,000 tons during the first year, decreasing to 700,000–800,000 tons in each of the two following years. On the other hand, construction was to be stimulated so as to produce 300,000 tons in the first year, rising steadily in successive years to 500,000 tons and 600,000 tons.³

These estimates proved far too optimistic. Losses assumed staggering dimensions with the intensification of the war, especially after the summer of 1942, when fierce battles began to rage on and around Guadalcanal Island. Fleet after fleet of transports went to reinforce the hard-pressed island garrison, only to be sent to the bottom of the sea through hostile action. When the island was finally abandoned in February of the following year, it marked the beginning of the rapid collapse of our supposedly impregnable defense positions. As of December 1, 1942, twelve months after the start of the war, we still possessed 5,252,201 tons of shipping. These were divided among the Army (A), Navy (B), and civilian agencies (C), as follows:⁴

(A) 1,223,523 tons

(B) 1,409,042 tons

(C) 2,619,636 tons.

This was reduced to 4,763,634 tons within six months' time, with the distribution as follows:⁵

(A) 1,152,767 tons

(B) 1,286,364 tons

(C) 2,324,503 tons.

On May 1, 1945, the total holdings were no more than 1,924,799 tons of which (C) ships comprised only about 1,398,933 tons.

3. Cabinet Planning Board (Tokyo), "Estimate of Japanese National Strength at Outbreak of the Greater East Asia War," cited by Cohen, *Japan's Economy in War and Reconstruction*, p. 254. (Ed.)

4. USSBS, *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on Japan's War Economy*, p. 176, Table C-99. (Ed.)

5. *Ibid.* (Ed.)

Moreover, nearly one-fourth of this battered merchant fleet was unfit for service due to heavy damage, leaving us with only 935,886 tons in serviceable condition.⁶

If we had recalled that the Planning Board laid down a minimum requirement of 3,000,000 tons for (C) ships, we might well have despaired as the hopeless shipping situation went daily from bad to worse. With the dwindling number of bottoms the supply of essential raw materials from the occupied regions fell off. This in turn severely curtailed the production of arms and ammunition, while the demand for them grew with preparation for what the military called the decisive battle in the homeland.

Shipping was, in fact, the most vital necessity for a seagirt country like ours. In order to build new ships we required steel. For this purpose, however, the bulk of the iron ore had to be imported from overseas. This meant, in other words, that steel depended upon shipping which in turn was dependent upon steel. We were indeed caught in a vicious circle!

According to the United States authorities our total tonnage sunk during the war, including warships, amounted to 10,583,755 tons. Of this, 8,600,000 tons was merchant vessels of 500 or more gross tons, the balance being warships.⁷ Submarines took the heaviest toll, amounting to about 55 per cent of the total. Aircraft of all services accounted for about 30 per cent. Mines were responsible for about 10 per cent. Most of these mines were laid by B-29's.⁸

As for steel, there was a sharp decline in its production in the fourth year of the war (April, 1944–March, 1945), as seen from the following table showing ingot steel produced in all areas under Japanese control:⁹

April, 1941–March, 1942	7,567,000 tons
April, 1942–March, 1943	8,004,000 tons
April, 1943–March, 1944	8,838,000 tons
April, 1944–March, 1945	6,503,000 tons

6. *Ibid.* (Ed.)

7. *Japanese Naval and Merchant Shipping Losses during World War II by All Causes* (U. S. Government Printing Office, 1947), p. vi, as cited by Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 265–266. (Ed.)

8. USSBS, *Summary Report (Pacific War)*, p. 11. (Ed.)

9. Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 128, Table 13. (Ed.)

The production rate for ingot and finished steel was at only 21 per cent of capacity in the first quarter of 1945 (April–June).¹⁰ A modern war is said to be a war of steel, and with such small production we could not hope to carry on for an indefinite period—against the overwhelmingly larger production of the United States. The production of coal fell off so rapidly that already by midsummer of 1942 an acute crisis had developed.

As for liquid fuel, the lifeblood of an industrial nation at war, we fared no better. Immediately before the war, when the issue of peace or war still hung in the balance, the fighting services, particularly the Navy, advanced the theory that if Japan did not strike in time her oil stocks would soon be exhausted. This would result in totally immobilizing the combined fleet, as had previously happened to the Italian fleet. Of all the measures taken by the United States before Pearl Harbor the embargo on oil was perhaps the heaviest blow to the Supreme Command. After the rupture of negotiations for oil concessions in the Dutch East Indies in June, 1941, oil became “the burning question” of the day. To the Supreme Command the possibility of an embargo was a veritable nightmare. On the eve of the war the following balance sheet was prepared for the benefit of the government, some members of which were highly skeptical of the prospects of war against an industrial giant like the United States.¹¹

		<i>Supply</i> (kiloliters)	<i>Carry over</i> (kiloliters)
1st year	March, 1942	9,350,000	2,550,000
2nd year	April, 1942– March, 1943	2,600,000	150,000
3d year	April, 1943– March, 1944	5,300,000	700,000

The critical period, the Navy explained, was to be the second year, at the end of which stocks would be as low as 150,000 kiloliters. They said, however, that if this crisis was overcome the rest would be plain sailing. Oil would begin to flow in from the Indies. But it was not to be so. The diminution of shipping worked havoc with their all too sanguine plans for shipping oil from the

10. Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 129. (Ed.)

11. Data taken by the author from secret papers submitted to the imperial conference, 1941.

South Seas by tanker. Tankers were a prime target of the seemingly omnipresent American submarines. Actually, the supply of oil became so short in the beginning of 1945 that even the tactical maneuvers of the combined fleet had to be drastically curtailed. By the middle of the year we had to institute such rigorous economy in liquid fuel as even to hamper gravely the activities of our air forces.

At the same time, in spite of superhuman efforts the production of airplanes also took a sharp downward trend in 1945, after reaching a peak in 1944. The monthly averages for production of aircraft are as follows: ¹²

<i>Calendar year</i>	<i>Average monthly production</i>
1941	424
1942	738
1943	1,391
1944	2,348
1945 (January 1–August 15)	1,475

In June, 1944, production attained a peak of 2,857 planes. But in June, 1945, we produced only 1,415 planes. This was completely inadequate to replace the rising toll taken by the stupendous struggle then developing in the air. Moreover, sometimes as much as 50 or 70 per cent, or even more, of these new planes had to be scrapped before they engaged in battle. Some were condemned for mechanical imperfections. Others were ruined before combat, by crews whose training was insufficient. This was a consequence of the quick depletion of our experienced pilots. At about this time Dr. Tomizuka, chief of the Aeronautic Institute, was manhandled by the military police for having described these faulty planes and the insufficient training of their crews as "murderous"—a sensational episode of the time.

To the attrition of naval warfare there was added the aerial bombing of the industrial centers of our mainland. Our productive capacity thus suffered an alarming decline. It did not take long for our whole industrial system to crumble before our eyes. By the middle of 1945 we were losing heavily in production. For example, in July, 1945, we were down to 36 per cent of the peak production of aircraft, 32 per cent of the peak production of

12. Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 211, Table 28. (Ed.)

metals, and 35 per cent of the peak production in all industry.¹³

Yet at that time these shocking figures were kept strictly secret from the nation which remained completely ignorant of its real plight. A very few, not even including the cabinet ministers, were allowed access to these statistics; to divulge them would surely have meant the death penalty.

In marked contrast with our desperate plight, the industrial production of the United States showed a tremendous increase year after year. Taking the average of the five years 1935-1939 as the basis, the physical volume of production rose as follows:¹⁴

1935-1939	100
1940	125
1941	162
1942	199
1943	239
1944	235

It was generally believed that when the American index reached 195 it would be at the zenith of production. But this figure was already surpassed in 1942, and still American production rose steadily during 1943. Evidently that was more than sufficient to meet the requirements of the war in Europe and Asia, vast though they were, as the American government curtailed expenditures for the production of munitions in the next year, 1944. To take aircraft as an example, 49,445 aircraft were produced in 1942. The figure rose to 92,196 in 1943.¹⁵ These figures alone should have been enough to convince our military authorities of the futility of the struggle against the industrial mammoth!

The war leaders were clearly at their wits' end. However, they refused to admit their defeat was unavoidable. True, they no longer preached the gospel of a co-prosperity area in East Asia. This region was fast becoming a common poverty area, if nothing else. There were isolated army units, abandoned to their fate, everywhere in our former zone of conquest. Left on the inhospitable islands sprinkled over the South Pacific, they were no better than hostages to the enemy. They were completely wasted

13. USSBS, *The Effects of Air Attack on Japanese Urban Economy* (U. S. Government Printing Office, 1947), p. 19, Table 16. (Ed.)

14. *The World Almanac, 1950* (New York World-Telegram, 1950).

15. Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 210. (Ed.)

and utterly helpless. The ships that had once bridged the oceans between these outer defenses and the homeland had by now vanished without a trace. Even the militarists had changed their tune. They now said they were going to prosecute the war by falling back upon the illimitable resources of the triangular area of Japan, China, and Manchuria. In the end, however, the ship lanes between Japan and the Asiatic continent also became insecure. Aerial and underseas attacks in our inner zone increased in fury as months wore on and the enemy was enabled to concentrate his forces. Finally the harassed militarists were compelled to abandon even this triangular base and shamefacedly retreat into the Japanese mainland. Hence the revised slogan: "Now is the time for everyone to rally to the defense of the beloved fatherland!" Driven into submission, the disheartened nation reluctantly prepared for the worst. As there were no guns or swords to arm them with, they were told to improvise spears out of sharpened bamboo sticks! Men and women were herded together and compelled to drill with these primitive weapons morning and evening. Thus we would repel the enemy who, it was thought, might at any moment attempt a landing. The outcome of this was all too evident. A phalanx of bamboo spears was to be arrayed against the massed strength of superfortresses and tanks.

Riding a Tiger

I

EVER SINCE before the Pearl Harbor attack the Army had controlled the press and through it had molded public opinion in favor of war. Throughout the nearly four years of war the Army dominated the domestic scene. Unchallenged and uncontested, it had regimented the people's minds along narrowly patriotic lines. Although the population was growing apathetic toward the war and disillusioned by continuous defeats, it was almost impossible to arouse them to assert their will. They still feared the powerful Army and its satellite, the ubiquitous military police. Popular discontent remained latent. The Army, as always, gagged the nation and exercised an unbridled tyranny over it. As early as the middle of February, 1945, while Koiso was struggling to mend the fortunes of his shaky cabinet, the Army began to prepare the nation for what it called the final and decisive battle on the mainland of Japan.

When Admiral Suzuki was installed as prime minister in April, 1945, the Army did not take him too seriously. Yet he was an unknown quantity, and hence they tried to make him commit himself publicly and irrevocably to a policy of full prosecution of the war, whatever the prospects. This is precisely why the press, taking hints from the Army, hailed the new cabinet as the "last cabinet."

What was meant by this? According to the Army it meant that there should be no more changes of government during the war. The new cabinet was given the task of fighting it through. However, the small minority who wanted to see hostilities cease at an early date held that this very cabinet was entrusted with the responsibility of terminating the war. For them, this was to be the last belligerent cabinet. As there are two faces to a coin, so were there two mutually incompatible interpretations of the term "last cabinet."

If a direct appeal to the people had been possible the matter would have been much simpler, but this was entirely out of the question. Therefore the peace party, under a heavy handicap, had to conduct secret and hazardous maneuvers with a view to capturing the new cabinet and converting it to a policy of terminating the war without delay. We could not afford to wait idly by until the people should awake from their stupor and demand the cessation of hostilities. Time was too short for that. The change in national policy had to come from above and not from below. There developed, therefore, between the warmongers and the peace promoters a subtle struggle to gain control of the government.

Now in matters of war and peace there are four key cabinet members. These are the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the ministers of the navy and of war. I have already explained the personal view of Prime Minister Suzuki and Foreign Minister Togo regarding the conduct of the war. The former was ignorant of the realities of the situation and was consequently more or less optimistically inclined. The latter was well versed in the current situation and was therefore deeply pessimistic.

Admiral Yonai, the navy minister, was an avowed supporter of the peace movement and was widely acknowledged as such. He had been vice premier and navy minister in the Koiso cabinet. The senior jushin, particularly Admiral Okada and Prince Konoye, wanted to put Yonai in a position of power within the cabinet so that he might influence Koiso and guide government policy toward an early termination of the war. Unfortunately Koiso belied our expectations, and Yonai could not accomplish much. But such was the irresistible charm of Yonai's personality that his prestige did not suffer thereby. Thus it was quite clear from the beginning that we could depend upon Yonai as a factor for peace in the Suzuki cabinet.

There remained the war minister, General Anami. This officer was the darling of the Army at the moment. Anami, in fact, enjoyed the full confidence of the younger officers, who regarded him as a symbol of determination to fight the war to the bitter end.

We may now assess the situation. Of the four key men Yonai (Navy) and Togo (Foreign Office) were definitely for peace;

Anami (Army) was equally definitely for war; Suzuki (prime minister) seemed to incline toward peace but did not appear to be quite sure of himself. If we could make certain of Suzuki, the count would be three to one. Obviously the peace party must concentrate its efforts upon the old admiral. It was by no means through pure accident that Sakomizu, Okada's son-in-law, was appointed chief secretary to the cabinet and that Colonel Matsutani, who was an able and ardent advocate of an early peace, was appointed first private secretary to the prime minister. It will be recalled that Colonel Matsutani had been sent to the China front after inviting the displeasure of General Tojo. After the collapse of the Tojo cabinet he was recalled to Tokyo in 1944, largely through Shigemitsu's intervention, and became aide-de-camp to the war minister. In that capacity he served first under General Sugiyama and later under General Anami. He was therefore an ideal officer to assist Admiral Suzuki in seeking an early peace. Both he and Sakomizu were close friends of mine and I collaborated with them fully in the interests of peace.

We might, with good luck, succeed in making our views prevail upon the government by outvoting Anami three to one. But there yet remained the hardest nuts to crack, the chiefs of staff of the Army and Navy. General Umezu, the army chief of staff, had recently been commander in chief of the Kwantung army in Manchuria. He had been the vice war minister from 1936 to 1938 and had recently been frequently mentioned as a possible candidate for the premiership. He was exceedingly ambitious and an ambitious man seldom displays courage if it is likely to jeopardize his career. Umezu possesses a pleasant manner which attracts followers, but his mind is often impenetrable. His face is entirely devoid of expression or emotion, so much so that he has earned the nickname of "the ivory mask."

The naval chief of staff, Admiral Toyoda, had directed operations as commander in chief of the combined fleet. He was the hope of the Navy and would have been at the top rung of the ladder long before if it were not for his intense, almost morbid, dislike of the Army. At a time when the cooperation of the two fighting services was never more imperative Toyoda's appointment as chief of staff caused some anxiety, but he was installed in the office on the ground that an unprecedented crisis required a man of steady

nerves and settled convictions. Both these men stood for a more vigorous prosecution of the war. It must be remembered that these two, together with the above-mentioned cabinet ministers, composed the Supreme War Council.

When the Suzuki cabinet took office we thought it imperative that the character of the Supreme War Council should be drastically changed. We wanted to alter it as soon as possible to a Supreme Peace Council. To do so it was essential to free the council from the overwhelming influence of the military. The first step was obviously to eliminate the "secretariat" together with the hot-headed young officers. We therefore tried, with some success, to impress upon the prime minister the advisability of limiting the participants in the Supreme Council to its six constituent members and of excluding all the rest. During the Koiso regime the council was usually attended by three civilians, the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the chief secretary of the cabinet. Six officers also attended, namely, the chiefs of staff, the vice chiefs of staff, and the directors of the Military Affairs Bureaus of the Army and Navy. As the prime minister was also a retired general, there were in fact only two civilian participants, one of whom, the chief secretary of the cabinet, was almost a complete supernumerary. This meant entire isolation for the foreign minister, who was virtually the only man representing the civil interest. There was once even an attempt on the part of the Army to oust the foreign minister, then Shigemitsu, from the council, as his views often collided with those of the Army. Now if the participants were limited to the six members the position of the foreign minister would automatically improve. Moreover, if Suzuki were converted to peace we would have the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the navy minister endeavoring for peace as against the war minister and two chiefs of staff who were committed to war. That would mean that the Supreme Council would be equally divided—a great stride toward ending the war.

Therefore, soon after the inauguration of the cabinet the Supreme Council met and agreed:

1. To deliberate only on important state affairs.
2. To take the initiative, grapple with the urgent situation, and shape the necessary policies to cope with it. Not to acquiesce as hitherto in the recommendations submitted by the secretariat.

3. For this purpose, to hold confidential meetings of the constituent members only, excluding all other participants.

In conformity with this decision confidential meetings were frequently convened from about the middle of May, 1945, when the situation reached quite a delicate stage. The six members deliberated in utmost secrecy, leaving the vigilant younger officers completely in the dark. The vice ministers of war and the navy, the vice chiefs of staff, the directors of the Military Bureaus, and the intractable young officers—all these were left in the dark and little suspected the real nature of these conferences. Perhaps they did not take the meetings seriously. They were so overconfident that they did not like to imagine their superiors could accomplish anything without their assistance and guidance! Anyway, to the very last, little if any news leaked out. This in large measure explains why the capitulation was brought about quietly and without internal upheavals as in the February 26 incident, and in spite of the fact that the military were ostensibly still in full control.

The gathering of these six top men could not serve a useful purpose, however, unless it was backed by a proper working staff. Such a staff was created by informal agreement between the prime minister, the foreign minister, and the service ministers, each appointing a personal representative. In view of the important role assigned to the lord privy seal, a representative for him was also nominated. In order to keep the existence of the body strictly secret it was limited to as few persons as possible. In fact it consisted of only four: For the prime minister and the war minister: Colonel Matsutani. For the navy minister: Admiral Takagi.¹ For the lord privy seal: Marquis Matsudaira. I represented the foreign minister. Enough has already been told of Colonel Matsutani. Marquis Matsudaira is a scion of a very distinguished house and had ably served the lord privy seal for nearly ten years as first private secretary. Since he studied political science in England and France, his outlook is naturally markedly liberal. He enjoyed the confidence of Prince Saionji and other liberal leaders, including the jushin. In fact, it was through the recommendation of Saionji that he received the appointment in the imperial palace. Admiral Takagi, an exceptionally intelligent officer, was a confidant of Admiral Yonai.

1. Rear Adm. Sokichi Takagi, IJN, had been attached to Naval General Headquarters in 1943 and again in 1944. He retired on September 15, 1945.

He too is an advanced liberal, gifted with farsighted vision. We had all vigorously opposed the policy of aggrandizement and now we pooled our resources to expedite the return of peace.

This secret body actually replaced and relegated the secretariat of the Supreme War Council to the background. We four met frequently to arrange for the gathering of the six. Our meeting served as a clearinghouse of information, as we exchanged current reports together with our own views. Soon this body began to function as a steering committee for the Supreme War Council so far as peace moves were concerned. But we worked under terrible hazards, as we were likely to invite the suspicion of the military police. We often changed our place of meeting, shifting it from one spot to another in order to avoid detection. This was extremely troublesome with the constant air raids, for the bombs exercised no discrimination in choosing their targets. One of our favorite shelters was the Diet, where through the courtesy of Kobayashi, chief secretary of the upper house, we could meet in complete security and escape the attention of the police. Kobayashi was one of the most courageous advocates of peace, and we relied extensively upon his generous cooperation.

2

We now faced the fundamental question: how could we prepare for peace? I have already explained that the reorientation of our policy could not take its initiative from the people. Consequently we had to concentrate our efforts on the very few who held high office. In doing so we relied strongly upon such men as Konoye, Okada, and Kido, lord privy seal, who was the closest adviser to the Emperor. Our ultimate source and strength was the throne, the influence of which we now tried to exploit on behalf of peace. We knew we could count on full support from that quarter. Hence a close and confidential contact was maintained between Kido and the peace party and it fell to me to act as liaison between the Foreign Office and the lord privy seal. I did this mostly through Marquis Matsudaira, the latter's able private secretary.

We strove to drive home to the aged prime minister the actual realities of the situation. The quickest way to do this seemed to be by acquainting him with the insurmountable economic difficul-

ties of the war. We therefore advised him to order government officials to prepare an analytical study of our material power. They were to be specifically instructed that only unvarnished facts and undistorted figures be reported. This instruction was deemed necessary because the Planning Board would not scruple to cut the cloth to suit the convenience of the military, from whom they had long been accustomed humbly to take orders. If the prime minister and other top officials were duly informed of the dismal situation they would, we were sure, be forced to acknowledge the utter futility of continuing the war.

Side by side with the question of material resources, however, there was the military situation; the truth about this was largely kept from the civil servants, even including the prime minister. Quite often the service ministers themselves were insufficiently informed of developments in the main theaters of war which the Supreme Command for one reason or another kept secret. It was, indeed, very difficult for us to lift the iron curtain. We were fortunate, however, in possessing a few officers well placed in GHQ who kept us posted as to developments. Through them we obtained accurate and up-to-date information which we passed on to Konoye, Kido, and a few others who were exerting themselves on behalf of peace. Incidentally through the same group of officers we tried gradually to build up secret cells among the army and navy officers which would share our views and clandestinely work for the same goal.

By degrees the prime minister began to appreciate the real nature of the task assigned him. The more he learned of the extensive depletion of our war potential and our military helplessness the more convinced he became of the hopelessness of our position. He awakened gradually to the necessity of calling an early cease fire. Yet to the Army the desperate situation served as a justification for tightening its control over the nation and over the people whom it regarded as inexpensive cannon fodder. The Army had by this time abandoned the pet theory of a war of long duration upon which it had once pinned its hope. It was now preparing the nation for one brief and bloody encounter, on the outcome of which everything, it said, was staked. If the enemy pressure was growing, the more reason, the military contended, to stiffen the resistance. If munitions were running out it was, they urged,

imperative to mobilize the last ounce of our material resources.

In order therefore to convince the government that an unprecedented crisis was confronting the nation, the Army also began a separate survey of the situation. It was, we understood, its intention to invest the government with dictatorial power. Once the Suzuki cabinet should be firmly pledged to the policy of fighting to the bitter end the Army would dispense with the Diet in the prosecution of the war. It planned to introduce a measure by which the Diet would delegate emergency powers to the government, tantamount to requesting parliament to sign its own death warrant.

For our own part we at once grasped the opportunity to consolidate the position of the government. Ordinarily the Diet, as the highest organ of the state, should reflect the freely expressed will of the people and act upon it. But the Diet had long since become defunct. There no longer existed any semblance of public opinion. The war party and its opponent, the peace party, thus agreed that the desperate situation called for drastic measures. However, they differed entirely as to the nature of these measures. One demanded a more vigorous prosecution of the war, the other a quick termination of it. Both wanted to enhance the prestige of the government in order to use it as an instrument to advance their respective, and mutually opposed, aims.

However, as a result of an objective study of the critical situation, a considerable number of officers at GHQ began to waver somewhat in their determination to fight it out to the very end. It was high time for even fools in paradise to wake up. Their professed policy of fighting fire with fire would end only in chaos. This would be exploited fully by the Communists whom they most cordially detested. They now began uneasily to shift their ground, saying that diplomacy should get well prepared to negotiate an advantageous peace after we had scored a substantial victory and repelled the imminent hostile invasion.

This was quite a different tune from the one they used to sing. There remained only one point of difference between the Army's views and ours. Whereas the Army before negotiating for peace wanted to fight the last battle, out of which it professed the ability to emerge victorious, we desired to embark at once upon diplomatic conversations with a view to speeding the restoration of peace. For we were highly skeptical of the Army's ability to en-

gauge the superior foe successfully. The Army said, "Give us a last opportunity to prove our worth and vindicate our honor." We replied, "The issue of the last battle is so easy to predict that it will be far wiser to cease hostilities while the mainland still remains intact and before we have lost the power of resistance completely." Arguments waxed hot but the Army would not retreat from its position.

When the Diet met on April 7 we wanted to make use of the prime minister's customary address on the state of the nation to put out a peace feeler by suggesting negotiations for peace. But the time was not ripe for this gesture. Actually the address, as shown below, was a passionate appeal to fight it out to the bitter end. The most the cabinet did in concession to our request was to include a vague passage regarding the Emperor's solicitude for peace. It was altogether a very unsatisfactory public utterance on the part of the new prime minister. Here is the main part of the text:

Today the empire is facing the greatest crisis since its beginning. Ever since the opening of the present war the Imperial Armed Forces have gained glorious results on land, sea, and in the air. At the same time the efforts made by the hundred million people behind the guns have also been tremendous. Yet despite this national effort the war situation has gradually become urgent and already the enemy has invaded Okinawa, a corner of our territory. At Okinawa we are inflicting heavy damage on the enemy by the united action of our army and navy forces, and also by the daring fighting by the officials and people of the islands. This patriotic spirit and their immortal merit are to be remembered eternally in the records of the empire, and for them I wish to express my sincere respect.

But this situation in Okinawa today is very serious, and we have come to a stage where we have to expect enemy invasion in other places on the mainland. It is now the time for the entire people to rise, view the situation squarely, and act with decisive determination. . . .

For many years I served near the imperial throne, and I am very deeply impressed by the great concern His Majesty the Emperor has for the peace of the world and the welfare of humanity. I believe that in the whole world there is none who is more deeply interested in world peace and human welfare than His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Japan.

It is the policy of the imperial family ever since the establishment of

the empire to enable all nations to enjoy their respective places, to make all peoples brothers without invasion and exploitation, to clarify the morality of the human race, and to advance human culture. . . .

Once in 1918 I navigated to the western coast of the United States as commander of the training squadron. When I was invited to a welcome reception at San Francisco I delivered an address concerning a war between Japan and the United States. To mention an outline of the address, I stated that the Japanese are no lovers of war but a people that love peace. I explained by mentioning many historical facts. Then I said that there was no cause for a war between the two countries, and that if there ever were a war, it would be much prolonged and would invite a very foolish result. I said that the Pacific Ocean is a blessing given by Heaven for the intercourse of Japan and the United States and if the ocean were ever used for transporting troops both countries would receive punishment from heaven. But twenty years later unfortunately the two countries came to war. It is most regrettable.

I hear that the enemy is now urging an unconditional surrender on us such as would only aim at the destruction of our polity and the ruin of our race. There is but one way for our nation to follow, and that is to fight to the very end to guard our self-existence.

The spirit of our people is patriotism through seven lives. Our people could never exist without polity. The unconditional surrender voiced by the enemy means the death of our people. We have no way but to fight. If our main island ever becomes a battlefield, our advantage in geographical position and human unity will surpass that of the enemy. A huge army can very easily be amassed at a required point, or supplies sent, and thus it is quite possible to smash and annihilate the enemy.

With the establishment of the regional headquarters, the government has planned the perfecting of the internal structure, enabling the execution of proper and timely administrative measures under the urgent wartime conditions. The government is also planning to meet the urgent situation by forming the National Volunteer Corps to further strengthen the productive and defense structures. Thus to the present Diet is submitted the National Volunteer Corps Bill. . . .

What is necessary is the strong fighting spirit of the people. We feel much encouraged when we see many air-raid sufferers rising immediately to take up the reconstruction and recovery of their activity. Now all of us have to fight by manifesting our entire strength, and it is foolish to become disappointed or hopeless because of a local war condition. To offer everything at the imperial command is the true spirit of the Japanese people. I believe that the essence of politics lies

in clarifying the polity and the people's duty. When the entire people are unified as one protecting the polity and guarding the empire, are determined each to advance the fortune of the empire, shouldering his duty, manifesting his best and greatest efforts, concentrating all endeavors to one point of winning the war, and thus bravely fighting, then morality is established and our fighting strength will be developed more under the orderly structure. . . .²

But granted the Army scored a victory and administered a severe blow to the invaders, would the United States abandon her offensives? That would indeed be taking too much for granted. Since the invasion would be on a grand scale the engagement would be a furious one costing us heavily in men and matériel. How could we hope to replenish these losses after we had expended the last ounce of our strength? The Army wanted to engage in "the last battle," but surely the United States would not allow it the luxury: she would attack in full force again and again in quick succession until our resistance was knocked to pieces. With her huge industrial power the United States could easily replace her losses regardless of their magnitude, whereas we could not muster strength for the second round.

Did not the European defenses, far superior to ours, crumble under the overwhelming weight of the American offensives? Three months prior to D day the Allies began to intensify their aerial attacks with heavy bombs that shattered the coast fortifications and disrupted the communications in the hinterland. In 1944 the U. S. Air Force alone dropped on the German occupied regions in western Europe more than 1,100,000 tons of bombs.³ The Fortress of Europe was really without a roof! Within twenty-six days after D day some 1,000,000 troops, 566,648 tons of supplies, and 171,532 vehicles were landed on the Normandy coast in spite of the desperate counterattacks of the well-trained German forces.⁴ These instances are enough to show that short of a miracle we could not have hoped to hold the line against the increasing American pressure. The fact that landings on Saipan, Leyte, Luzon, and Okinawa were uniformly accomplished with an amazing speed did not augur well. Already B-29's were making more

2. Source unavailable. (Ed.)

3. S. T. Possony, *Strategic Air Power* (Infantry Journal Press, 1949), p. 53. (Ed.)

4. D. D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (Doubleday & Co., 1948), p. 270. (Ed.)

than a thousand sorties weekly from the Marianas bases, inflicting incalculable damage on our military and industrial installations. It was reported that in Guam alone one million gallons of gasoline were being consumed daily by aircraft. It would have taken a railroad train 120 miles long to transport the military stocks amassed there, we were informed. Vast military bases were being prepared all over the western Pacific. It was probable that the majority of the warships and aircraft of the United States were on combat duty in the Pacific theater. It took only a child's imagination to see that we did not have any chance at all. We advanced such arguments as these, but the Supreme Command stood adamant to the very last moment, demanding another military chance.

3

Now our soldiers understood very little about diplomacy. They were in the habit of regarding the art of diplomacy as something akin to magic and they accordingly expected too much from it. Some of the high-ranking officers were actually building up hopes of assistance from the Soviet Union! They argued that with the surrender of Germany the Allies were bound to fall out among themselves. Thus the Soviet Union might cultivate amicable relations with Japan in order to cope with the probable combination against her of the United States and Great Britain. They also calculated that it would be to the benefit of the Kremlin to prolong the Pacific war and thus further weaken the participants in it, all of whom the Soviet deeply distrusted. The Soviet should be delighted beyond measure to see Japan, her time-honored rival in the Far East, bled white. At the same time, it would be highly advantageous for her to keep her great rivals of the future, the United States and Great Britain, preoccupied with a costly war in Asia. This would give her time to recuperate and also to consolidate freely a pre-eminent position in Europe. Such being the case, our military strategists hoped the Soviet Union would extend us covert, if not overt, assistance in opposing the United States and Great Britain. In fact they even went to the length of relying upon the Soviet Union for obtaining such sinews of war as oil, coal, and iron ores.

Generally speaking, the Soviet's attitude toward Japan had been

correct. The relations of the two countries were legally regulated by the neutrality pact of April 13, 1941, which was to last for five years. The pact stipulated that "In case neither of the contracting parties denounces the pact one year before expiration of the term, it will be considered automatically prolonged for the next five years." ⁵ (Article III.) That meant that if the Soviet government wanted to terminate the pact at its stipulated date of expiration, it had to notify our government by April 13, 1945, of its intention to do so.

It is true that with the rapid deterioration of our situation the Soviet press, which usually reflects the opinion of the Kremlin, had been more and more outspoken in predicting our ultimate defeat. Stalin's irritating remarks stigmatizing Japan as "an aggressor nation" constituted a source of deep anxiety for us. As has been said, these remarks were made on December 7, 1944, the anniversary of the Red Revolution. Since then our military situation had become still worse. So it was natural that our anxiety should mount with the approach of the deadline of April 13.

The Soviet government, however, preserved a noncommittal attitude until April 5, when it abruptly denounced the pact, stating as the reason that the alteration of the international situation made an extension unwarranted. This came as a bolt from the blue, shattering all illusions. The text of the notification is as follows:

The neutrality pact between the Soviet Union and Japan was signed April 13, 1941, before Germany attacked the Soviet Union and before the war between Japan on the one side and Britain and the United States of America on the other broke out.

Since that time the situation is entirely altered. Germany attacked the Soviet Union, and Japan, an Ally of Germany, helps the latter in her war against the U.S.S.R. Besides, Japan is fighting against the United States and Britain, who are allies of the Soviet Union.

Under these circumstances the neutrality pact between the Soviet Union and Japan has lost its sense and a prolongation of this pact is impossible.

In accordance with the aforesaid and with Article III of the pact, which foresees a denunciation of the pact in the year before the expiration of the pact's five-year period of effectiveness, the Soviet Govern-

5. *New York Times* (April 14, 1941), p. 8. (Ed.)

ment declares to the Japanese Government its wish to denounce the pact of April 13, 1941.⁶

The date of this notification was the very day of the collapse of the Koiso cabinet, but Ambassador Sato's report reached Tokyo only the next day. In fact Prince Konoye had just returned home from the ex-premiers' palace conference which recommended Admiral Suzuki to the throne when I called upon him with a copy of Sato's "urgent" telegram. It is thus clear that, contrary to the belief which was then current, the change of cabinet was not caused by the Soviet action.

Foreign Commissar Molotov, it is true, assured our ambassador that the neutrality pact was to remain in force for another year in spite of the denunciation. During that time, as hitherto, it would govern the relations of the two countries. But the tone of the Soviet note revealed more than ever the hard realism of the Kremlin. And the fact that the Soviet government did not wait until the stipulated date, April 13, to denounce the treaty gave us reason to be wary of its intentions. It was like the muffled sound of distant thunder that precedes a storm. Readers are aware that some six months earlier, at Teheran, Stalin had already promised to fight Japan after Germany's defeat.

What was the background of this new development? Germany had sealed her own fate by springing an attack upon the Soviet Union. Japan had not desired a conflict between Germany and the Soviet Union, and she did what she could to prevent it. As already stated, the Japanese leaders, including Konoye who was then prime minister, hoped that as a result of our alliance with Germany in 1940 an amicable relationship would develop between Japan, Germany, and the Soviet Union. This was due to the assurances given us by von Ribbentrop, the Nazi foreign minister, that Germany would be prepared to act as an intermediary in bringing about an improvement in our relations with Russia. It must be recalled that at this time Germany, under the Russo-German Nonaggression Pact of August, 1939, was enjoying fairly stable and satisfactory relations with the Soviet Union. There was even reported to be a scheme worked out by the designing Nazi foreign minister, commonly called the Ribbentrop plan, to the following effect:

6. *New York Times* (April 6, 1945), p. 4.

Japan, Germany, and Italy will enter into an agreement with the Soviet Union whereby

1. Soviet Russia will express its readiness to subscribe to the purpose of the Axis alliance with a view to preventing the extension, and bringing about a speedy termination, of current hostilities.

2. The Soviet Union will recognize and respect the leading positions of Japan, Germany, and Italy respectively in establishing a new order in Asia and Europe, and in return the three powers will respect the territorial integrity of the Soviet Union.

3. The three powers on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other undertake not to assist any country or to adhere to any group of nations hostile to the contracting parties.

4. (This item to be a secret undertaking.) There will be preserved for the four powers as their respective spheres of interest:

- A. The South Seas region for Japan

- B. Central Africa for Germany

- C. North Africa for Italy

- D. The Middle East including Iran and India for the Soviet Union.⁷

When, in March, 1941, Matsuoka, foreign minister in the Konoye cabinet, visited Europe on his six weeks' tour, the principal task assigned him was to negotiate a nonaggression pact with the Soviet government along the lines of the Ribbentrop plan and through the good offices of Germany. Contrary to the impression then current abroad, his visit to Berlin and Rome was not for serious negotiations, its purpose being largely a demonstration of Axis solidarity. The Japanese government had been informed by Ribbentrop that Soviet Foreign Commissar Molotov in an earlier conversation had indicated a favorable reaction to the Ribbentrop plan. Matsuoka in his negotiations with the Soviet government was to emphasize among others the following points:

1. Induce the Soviet Union to cooperate with the Axis powers in bringing about an early defeat of England by subscribing to the Ribbentrop plan.

2. Improve our relations with the Soviet Union by concluding a pact of friendship, preferably a nonaggression pact, and

- a. purchase North Sakhalin through the good offices of Germany or

- b. obtain 1,500,000 tons of oil annually for five years in return

7. Source unavailable. (Ed.)

for which, after the lapse of five years, the oil and coal concessions enjoyed by Japan in North Sakhalin will be restored to the Soviet Union. Also secure the purchase of the same amount of oil for five years after the restoration of these concessions.

3. Enter into an agreement whereby Japan recognizes and respects the Soviet Union's position in Sinkiang and Outer Mongolia and the Soviet recognizes and respects Japan's position in north China and Inner Mongolia.

4. Request the Soviet Union to withdraw support from the Chungking government.⁸

However, by the time Matsuoka arrived in Berlin on March 26 relations between Germany and the Soviet Union had undergone a drastic change, completely upsetting our calculations. The anti-Axis coup at Belgrade, which was generally believed to have been engineered by Russian agents, occurred on the day following Matsuoka's arrival at the German capital. Yugoslavia joined the Axis formally on the 25th; but two days later her army overthrew the government, rejected the regency of Prince Paul, and denounced its signature on the pact with Germany. Matsuoka was Ribbentrop's guest of honor at a luncheon on March 27, but the party was considerably delayed by the aggravation of the situation in the Balkans. In the afternoon of the same day Matsuoka conferred privately with Hitler for two and a half hours. As I sat waiting in the antechamber of the Führer's marble office in the Reichs Chancellery I saw a constant stream of messengers hurrying in with urgent telegrams for submission to the Führer. Evidently a storm was gathering in the Balkans, the traditional tinderbox of Europe.

When we arrived at Markinia, a station on the Russo-German boundary, in the early morning of April 6 we heard the German radio announce with blaring music that the Wehrmacht had begun its march into Yugoslav territory. The defiance of the small Balkan nation enraged Hitler and brought on a violent campaign. In less than two weeks Yugoslavia was subjugated; but nobody foresaw at that time that this Balkan campaign contributed toward Hitler's ultimate undoing. According to testimony at the Nuremberg trial, the Yugoslav putsch forced a five-weeks postponement of the Russian invasion. Had it started five weeks earlier Hitler's

8. Source unavailable. (Ed.)

legion would not have been so acutely hampered at the gates of Moscow by the winter snow. The short and apparently futile resistance of Yugoslavia made it possible for General Winter to intervene for Russia with its icy reinforcement. But that still was reserved for the impenetrable future.

When he received the news of the German advance into Siberia Matsuoka was reported to have said with a grin, "Providence has put a Russian treaty in my pocket." It certainly had.⁹ For ironically enough it was precisely this deterioration in the relations between Germany and the Soviet Union that facilitated Matsuoka's diplomatic efforts at Moscow. By a stroke of what he called "lightning diplomacy" Matsuoka persuaded Stalin to conclude a neutrality pact.

The pact consisted of four articles. In Article I the two powers undertook to maintain relations of peace and friendship, mutually respecting each other's territorial integrity. Article II stipulated that the two powers should maintain neutrality for the duration of the present conflict if one of them were made the object of military action by one or more than one third power. Article III contained a stipulation regarding the period of effectiveness of the pact, while Article IV contained a provision regarding its ratification.

Simultaneously with the publication of the neutrality pact a statement was issued over the signatures of Matsuoka and Molotov. This was to the effect that the Soviet Union on the one hand promised to respect the integrity and inviolability of the territory of the Manchou Empire and Japan on the other promised to respect the integrity and inviolability of the territory of the Mongolian Republic. This was tantamount to the extension by the Soviet Union of formal recognition to the independent state of Manchukuo which the United States and Great Britain had consistently refused to accord. The price Matsuoka paid for this pact was a promise to liquidate our concessions in North Sakhalin in a few

9. In the proclamation to the German people issued on the outbreak of the war with the Soviet Union, Hitler accused the latter of having incited Serbia to a war against Germany and said that exactly at that moment when he was advising Matsuoka to alleviate Japan's tense relations with the Soviet Union. Whether or not the Soviet government instigated Serbia is quite immaterial, but it is interesting that Hitler refers to his advice to Matsuoka. [Cf. Hitler's proclamation on invading the USSR, *New York Times* (June 22, 1941), p. 1. (Ed.)]

months' time. Together with the pact this statement created a great sensation throughout the world.

After the pact was solemnly signed in the Kremlin we were treated to a sumptuous buffet. Wine flowed liberally and the conversation grew animated as toast after toast was proposed: to Emperor Hirohito, to Kalinin, to Stalin, to Matsuoka, to Molotov . . . At first Stalin kept drinking out of his own bottle which contained some pink wine. Others drank champagne which was of excellent quality. Stalin occasionally poured the pink wine with his own hand into his glass and would not touch champagne. However, when Matsuoka asked Stalin to drink to the health of the Emperor the dictator put away his bottle and filled the glass with the foaming champagne. He very amiably proposed the toast. Both Stalin and Matsuoka were quite drunk by the time the latter took his leave. It was a really gay affair as Stalin, radiating good will, played a charming host. In the midst of the drinking bout I consulted my watch and found that it was almost time for the international train on which we were to leave to start. Stalin smiled and walked briskly to Molotov's desk, took up the telephone receiver and spoke a few words. Then he told us, "Gentlemen, the train will wait for you as long as necessary." The drinking was resumed with vigor. This was the Slav dictatorship in action!

In those days Stalin never took the trouble to see off foreign guests. Therefore when the dictator appeared on the platform with us everybody rubbed their eyes. But most surprised of all were the Axis ambassadors! Stalin warmly embraced Matsuoka and even allowed photographs to be taken of the scene. In fact, he kissed rather promiscuously. Try as I could, even I could not escape his bear hug. Clearly the neutrality pact was as much a gift of providence for the Soviet Union as it was for Japan. The astute dictator certainly knew that all was not well with his relations with his opposite number, Hitler. The resultant situation was an extremely baffling one. It had formerly been Germany that was befriended by the Soviet Union, while our relations with the latter were growing tense, even alarming. At any rate, the cherished dream of establishing a powerful alignment of Germany, Italy, Russia, and Japan against the Anglo-Saxon combination vanished like a bubble when Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June, 1941, only two months later.

When the news of the German attack reached Tokyo it produced consternation. On June 2 Hitler met Mussolini at the Brenner Pass. Four days later Hitler summoned General Oshima, our ambassador, to Berchtesgaden and gave him a broad hint regarding his intentions vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, not specifying, however, the time of action. According to Oshima's report Hitler said that two or three months would be quite sufficient to subjugate Russia if he took action immediately but that it would require far greater sacrifices to eliminate the Red menace after a few years' delay. Hitler also stated that Japan was free to decide on her own attitude but that her cooperation would be welcome. The Japanese government was considerably disturbed but did not believe the attack to be imminent or inevitable. This contrasts strangely with the position of the United States, which is said to have anticipated Hitler's move and to have warned the Soviet government of it as early as March.¹⁰

June 22, 1941, was an extremely hot day. Late in the morning we received a disquieting report through the International News Service that Germany and Soviet Russia had come to blows. Half dismissing it as a wild rumor, half believing it, I had the cable clerks of the Foreign Office put on the alert. It happened that President Wang Ching-wei of the Nanking government was on a state visit to our capital. He was guest of honor at a theater party held in the afternoon of this memorable day. Matsuoka was the host. All the dignitaries of the government were there together with the high-ranking officers of the fighting services. The Kabuki Theater was gay with society ladies in festive attire. The play was the *Shuzenji Monogatari*, a romantic tragedy describing the assassination of the Shogun, the generalissimo of feudal times.

During the performance I slipped downstairs to the cloakroom several times unobserved to telephone to the Foreign Office. Finally I obtained official confirmation of the outbreak of the war. An urgent dispatch from our embassy in Berlin had just arrived. It said that von Ribbentrop had sent for General Oshima at 4:00 A.M. and requested him to inform the Japanese government that in view of the increasingly hostile attitude of the Soviet Union in recent times Germany had opened war on it earlier that morning. At 5:30 the German radio broadcast Hitler's proclamation. As I

10. *Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (Macmillan Company, 1948), II, 968.

hurried back to my seat the curtain was slowly falling, amid thunderous applause for the last scene of the drama. I passed the news to Matsuoka who whispered it into Wang's ear. In a few minutes the startling news was public property. A rush to the doors and a scramble for automobiles followed, with general confusion as statesmen, soldiers, journalists fought their way out of the crowded lobby. I made my way back again through the excited crowd to the cloakroom and telephoned Marquis Kido. The lord privy seal, his wife told me, was taking a bath. However, when I mentioned the war Kido came rushing to the telephone—still quite wet, as he told me later. The Emperor was duly informed.

Men like Konoye suggested that the Axis alliance of Italy, Germany, and Japan should be nullified since Japan had entered it to contribute toward a continental alliance among Germany, Russia, and Japan. The Pact of Steel, which had originally been conceived as a diplomatic lever, now became a "brotherhood of the grave" endangering our very security. But such voices as Konoye's remained unheeded in the general uproar that greeted the initial success of the German Army, which boastfully declared that the struggle would be over in less than three months. Such a boast did not seem as fantastic then as it may seem now with the advantage of hindsight. The War Department at Washington estimated then that Germany would be "thoroughly occupied in beating Russia for a minimum of one month and a possible maximum of three months."¹¹

Unwarranted though it may have been, the idea of the continental alliance nevertheless persisted to the end. It was particularly influential among the military, who pressed the Foreign Office time and again to attempt mediation between Berlin and Moscow. Three times Shigemitsu in the Foreign Office approached the Kremlin to request a visa for a special envoy to be sent to Moscow to explore the possibility of peace by compromise. Each time the Soviet government declined the offer of mediation.

The first attempt was made shortly after the defection of Italy in September, 1943. That the Soviet Union did not join the Axis alliance was largely because Hitler refused to gratify Soviet aspirations regarding the Balkans. It is believed today that the first difference between Germany and the Soviet Union occurred in the

11. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, pp. 303-304.

fall of 1940 when Molotov visited Berlin. As the price for aligning herself on the side of the Axis the Soviet Union is understood to have demanded wide concessions not only in the Balkan regions, including control of the Dardanelles, but also in the Baltic Sea. Hitler categorically refused to consider these demands and several months later sprang his attack on the Soviet Union.

As a result, Germany had suffered many reverses on the eastern front, the severest being the tragic defeat at Stalingrad in February, 1943. It was obvious that for all her determination to the contrary Germany could no longer vanquish Russia. At the same time Italy's collapse definitely ended Mussolini's dream of a Mediterranean empire. Germany was no longer obliged to hold on to the Balkans in order to support Italian claims. That seemed to open an avenue of compromise with the Russians. Would it not be to the benefit of Germany to secure peace with the Soviet Union by gratifying the latter's ambitions in the Balkans? Germany, then, could concentrate her efforts on her struggle with England and the United States, while the relations of these two countries with the Soviet Union would seriously deteriorate in consequence of the Russian advance into the Mediterranean area. Shigemitsu reasoned along such lines and tried to persuade the German government, which nevertheless declined our offer of mediation with the Soviet government. Hitler was, as ever, adamant in his resolution to settle once and for all what he called the Red menace. Therefore Shigemitsu turned to the other party—Stalin.

On September 10, 1943, two days after the Italian capitulation, Ambassador Sato saw Molotov and requested a visa for a special Japanese envoy to be dispatched to Moscow. This envoy would travel to western Europe, including Germany, and through Turkey, after he had exchanged views with the Soviet government. He would pass through Moscow again on his way home and exchange views once more with the Soviet authorities. Molotov inquired whether the envoy's mission included any questions apart from the promotion of Russo-Japanese relations and received a reply in the affirmative. On September 13 Molotov sent for Sato and said that the envoy's mission was doubtless concerned with the endeavors for mediation between the Soviet Union and Germany. Since the Soviet government did not see any possibility of a truce or peace with Germany it therefore could not accept the proposal

of the Japanese government although it appreciated the spirit in which it was made. On this occasion Molotov read aloud a courteous note which included a statement that under different circumstances the Soviet government would have considered it its duty to accept the Japanese offer of mediation—a remark full of implication. Thus the first attempt miscarried.

Incidentally, it is interesting that Gromyko, Soviet chargé d'affaires in Washington, called upon Secretary Hull on September 16 to inform him of the Japanese démarche. Hull was highly gratified by this information and thanked Gromyko profusely. He writes in his memoirs: "I felt that the Soviet Union's decisively adverse reaction to Japan's approach, coupled with the prompt and full information she furnished us concerning it, was a happy augury for the forthcoming conference."¹² He was referring to the Moscow conference, held in late October of the same year, of foreign ministers of the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. Although at the beginning of 1943 Russia was "a complete sphinx to all the other nations of the world except that she stood there fighting heroically,"¹³ by the summer of that year she was gradually clarifying her attitude toward a rapprochement with the Western Allies. This was witnessed by Stalin's consent to hold the Moscow conference. Moreover, it was at this conference that Stalin confided to Hull the Soviet's intention to join in defeating Japan after the Allies vanquished Germany.¹⁴ In view of this development it was only natural that our proposal, made too late, should have met a rebuff.

The second attempt at mediation was made in April, 1944. Difficult negotiations regarding the Sakhalin concessions and the fishery convention were successfully concluded in March after ten months of discussions between Japan and the USSR. The relations between the two countries were gradually improving. Fighting had not yet been resumed between Germany and Russia after the lull of the winter months. Shigemitsu thought there was a possibility that if and when the Russians recovered their prewar frontier they might halt their advance and accept a truce on definitely advantageous terms. For it would be to the interest of the

12. Cordell Hull, *op. cit.*, p. 1264.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 1247.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 1309.

Soviet Union to get out of the war, and from there on as a third party to watch the struggle between the Axis and the democracies, in which she might intervene later at her pleasure. Such a surmise seemed reasonable in the light of Stalin's declaration made a year before, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Red Army. At that time he said that the Russian forces were not desirous of foreign conquests but were defending the national frontier.

Therefore Shigemitsu now tried once again to dispatch a special envoy to Europe. Sato called upon Molotov on April 8 and recalling the proposal made in September the previous year said that the Japanese government was actuated by an appreciation of the fact that the Soviet government could discharge a noble mission on behalf of peace. Molotov inquired if there were any specific reasons that made the Japanese government renew the same proposal. Had Germany asked Japan to mediate for her? On receiving a negative answer Molotov replied on April 12 that as there had been no alteration in the situation the Soviet government could not change its attitude in the matter of the proposed mediation. Thus the second attempt also proved abortive.

In September, 1944, Shigemitsu for the third time brought up the question of sending an emissary to Moscow. On the 16th Sato requested Molotov to accord facilities of travel to such an emissary. This time the envoy was to visit Moscow only. His task was to assist Sato, who had been away from home more than two and a half years and was not fully acquainted with the situation in Japan. It would be highly beneficial for both countries if the services of an envoy who was thoroughly informed of the domestic situation were available in Moscow to assist Sato in promoting better relations between the two nations.

Molotov replied that the relations between Tokyo and Moscow were quite satisfactory and in his opinion did not require the dispatch of a special envoy. Moreover, if the Soviet government received such an envoy it would create unnecessary speculation both at home and abroad and might be interpreted as a move in connection with mediation between the Soviet Union and Germany. On these grounds Molotov refused to accept the Japanese proposal, and the third attempt also fell through. This attempt was made at the decision of the imperial conference on foreign policy which met shortly after the inauguration of the Koiso cabinet in

July. Hirota was the person proposed as the special envoy on each of these three occasions.

At about the time of the last attempt General Oshima, our ambassador to Berlin, was also actively trying to persuade the German government to come to terms with the Soviet Union. But Hitler was firm in his refusal to talk peace with Stalin. He was still hopeful of final victory, although men around him like Goebbels and Ribbentrop were gradually becoming skeptical.

Our attempts were doomed to futility from the first because both combatants were taking an extremely rigid position from which they would not and could not withdraw. But as Germany's military situation in the east grew desperate our efforts at mediation were redoubled in order to save her from utter defeat. If Germany patched up a peace with the Soviet Union and concentrated her strength, which was still formidable, on the defense in the west, she might yet, some thought, be able to withstand the gathering Allied pressure. Such was also reported to be the view of General von Brauchitsch and the German High Command. Hitler, though cruelly disillusioned, would not listen to reason. He asserted that it was his heaven-ordained mission to fight the evil of Bolshevism. Nor would the Kremlin, with victory in sight, stoop to negotiate. Our endeavors, therefore, were like those of a matchmaker who tries to persuade an irreconcilable divorced couple to remarry.

Meanwhile our own military position was rapidly deteriorating. In order to reinforce the home defense the bulk of the highly trained Manchurian army had to be transferred to the mainland of Japan, leaving Manchuria but thinly defended. In sharp contrast, the Soviet garrison in Siberia was gradually augmented.¹⁵ Beginning about March, 1945, trainload after trainload of soldiers

15. The strength of the Kwantung army and that of the Russian forces in the Soviet East were approximately:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Kwantung Army</i>	<i>Soviet Forces</i>
1940	460,000	700,000 (2,700)
1941	700,000	800,000 (1,000)
1942	700,000	750,000 (1,000)
1943	600,000 (405)	790,000 (1,000)
1944	400,000 (353)	
1945 (August 13)	650,000 (150)	

The figures in parentheses indicate the number of airplanes.

and equipment was sent eastward from the European theater where the war against Germany was drawing to a close. This was an ominous sign. Apparently something had to be done to assure the continued tranquillity of our northern border. Should the Soviet Union strike at us it would mean the instant collapse of our entire front, as we were hard pressed everywhere. This meant that we had to offer an enticing compensation to the Soviet Union for the continued observance of the neutrality pact.

It is, to say the least, singular that our diplomatic vista should have been limited to that very Soviet Russia which our leaders secretly distrusted so. In the first stages of the war we vainly tried to establish a working partnership among the four powers and thereby create a common front between the Axis powers and the Soviet Union. In the middle stages we attempted a Russo-German mediation in order to avert a German defeat. In the final stages, to save our own situation we tried to curry favor with the Kremlin. Thus throughout the Pacific war our main diplomatic endeavors were concentrated upon Moscow, creating a sort of habit of mind which, I think, partly explains why we chose the Soviet government as the channel for addressing the Allied powers prior to our surrender.

History abounds in ironies worth remembering. The neutrality pact is one of these. On the day the proud German Army swept into Russia, seeming to overwhelm the Red Army, Mr. Smetanin, the Soviet ambassador in Tokyo, almost begged Matsuoka, our foreign minister, to give him assurances that Japan would abide by the pact. Matsuoka was deliberately equivocal in his reply, since our policy was not yet shaped. He told the ambassador that Japan was put in an extremely embarrassing position by the outbreak of the unfortunate war between her ally Germany and the Soviet Union with whom she wanted to maintain friendly relations. Japan was therefore most anxious to see hostilities speedily terminated. However, he said, Japan's policy was based upon the alliance with Germany, and if the neutrality pact conflicted with this alliance the latter had to prevail. I can still vividly recall Smetanin, pale with excitement, walking crestfallen from Matsuoka's suburban residence where the interview secretly took place.

Several days later, on July 2, 1941, the imperial conference

decided formally upon a policy of nonintervention, or at least of watchful waiting. Smetanin was informed anew that

the Japanese government did not feel compelled to modify its policy toward the Soviet Union except to the extent of its natural desire not to give rise to any misunderstanding on the part of its allies. It was its sincere hope to be able to pursue a policy scrupulously calculated at once to serve its own interests and to preserve the spirit of mutual trust among the allies, while maintaining good relations with the Soviet Union.¹⁶

On the same day General Ott, the German ambassador, called upon Matsuoka in the evening under urgent instructions from Berlin. Ott brought with him a message from von Ribbentrop which urged Japan to occupy Vladivostok as quickly as possible and to advance westward so as to effect a junction with the German forces in Soviet territory before winter. Thus, von Ribbentrop said, direct communication between the two allies would be established and they would be able to settle the Russian question once and for all by eliminating the Bolshevik menace. This would also clear the way for Japan's southward advance.

Matsuoka replied that basic policy on this matter had just been decided at the imperial conference and that it was impossible to deviate from it. However, he said, Japan was preparing for all possible eventualities in order to combat the menace of communism and would endeavor to restrain the Soviet Union at the Far Eastern end. He pointed out that Japan's effort to restrain the United States and Great Britain in the Pacific constituted a no less vital contribution toward the common cause than an intervention in the Soviet-German war.

It is interesting to note that Germany consistently tried to checkmate Great Britain and the United States by making use of Japan. When she first advised us to improve our relations with the Soviet Union, she was prompted by a desire to align the Soviets with the powers opposed to the Anglo-American combination. If our relations with the Soviet were once adjusted, Germany calculated that we could advance southward and seriously endanger the British position. However, German-Soviet relations took an

16. Source unavailable. (Ed.)

unexpected turn and Germany attacked the Soviet Union "to crush the Bolshevik regime." Thereupon Germany urged us to attack the Soviets on the ground that by eliminating the Russian threat we could more vigorously pursue our own policy of expansion toward the south. That would have helped Germany in her war against both the Soviet Union and Great Britain.

Bismarck once said that there were in every alliance a knight and—his horse. Germany was always the knight and her partner the horse to carry him. It was in a way fortunate that military collaboration did not develop between Japan and Germany. Although a notion seems to prevail that Japan and Germany fully coordinated their actions in carrying out a common plot to dominate the world, this is contrary to the fact. Such an assumption—contained, for example, in that interesting book, *How War Came*, by Davis and Lindley, seems quite natural. But the truth was that the Axis partnership remained virtually a paper alliance. Throughout the war there was little if any collaboration between Japan and Germany; each went its own way regardless of the other.

Incidentally, a calculation like that of Germany may have influenced the leaders of the Kremlin when they entered into the neutrality pact with us. Once set free from her preoccupation in the north, would not Japan embark upon an aggressive policy in the south, eventually precipitating a conflict with Great Britain and the United States? That would have considerably enhanced the security of the Soviet Union in the East at a moment when her relations with Germany were deteriorating.

Thus when the Soviet-German war started Japan chose to stay out, sitting on the fence. However, as already stated, when the possibility of the so-called continental alliance vanished, we tried to reorient our policy by repairing our relations with the United States. Unfortunately it proved too late for this to succeed.

Less than six months later, as we embarked upon the hazardous war against the United States, it became our turn to seek assurances from the Soviet government that it would duly observe the neutrality pact. Moscow readily gave the desired assurances on condition that the pact would also be fully respected by us. As long as the Russians were on the defensive and we were on the offensive, the pact served as the basis of otherwise rather dubious relations. As the tide changed, however, the Russians assuming the offensive

and we being forced onto the defensive, the pact became less attractive to Moscow, at the same time that it grew vitally important for Tokyo. Thus, when the Soviet government notified us of its intention to denounce the pact, the positions were exactly reversed.

To borrow a metaphor from Shakespeare, our relationship was comparable to

A deep well
That owes two buckets filling one another;
The emptier ever dancing in the air,
The other down, unseen and full of water.¹⁷

At one time we had been up in the air and the Russians down in the well; now Japan was the bucket that traveled deep down into the abyss.

4

The attitude of the Soviet government was a source of profound concern to the Suzuki cabinet. We could not, in the circumstances, rely too much on the assurances of Molotov that the neutrality pact was still effective for another year. While formerly the maintenance of neutral relations was the aim of our diplomacy, our policy now became one of preventing the Soviet's participation in the war, and to this end every effort was bent.

I have already described our military plight, and our efforts to convince our leaders of the utter futility of prolonging the struggle. Parallel with this, we now took up the question of our policy toward the Soviet Union, a matter whose extreme urgency was universally recognized throughout the country. There was a unanimous desire to improve relations with our powerful neighbor. Our military people, frightened out of their wits at the thought of a new war with the Red Army, were willing to pay the heaviest price to prevent it. Indeed the question of price did not enter their minds. If a ship is doomed what matters its cargo, however precious? Jettison the cargo as fast as possible, if only doing so may save the ship.

It was, therefore, the strategy of our peace party to initiate conversations with the Kremlin in order to prepare the stage secretly

17. *King Richard II*, IV. i. 184. (Ed.)

for the final act of terminating hostilities. We calculated that once our leaders were completely disillusioned they could no longer refuse to admit the necessity of ending the war. Of course we were to try to obtain the best terms possible, but we knew very well that we could end the war only by a virtual surrender.

By the middle of May, 1945, the six top men of the Supreme War Council finally agreed upon a course of policy toward the Soviet Union. They decided to make use of Hirota, one of the ex-premiers and a former ambassador to Moscow. He would approach the Soviet ambassador in Tokyo and explore the possibilities of improving Russo-Japanese relations. If such possibilities existed Japan would not be averse to making considerable concessions. Simultaneously it was also decided that there should be three stages in conducting the conversation:

1. Try to negotiate for the extension of the neutrality pact.
2. If this were gained, broaden the negotiations, aiming at a nonaggression treaty.
3. If the worst became unavoidable, request the Soviet government to use its good offices with the United States and Great Britain for the restoration of peace.

Logically speaking, there were only two stages. For negotiations under 1 would suffice to show the Soviet's attitude, which would be either favorable to our efforts or indifferent to them. If it were favorable we could advance to stage 2, but if not we would have to retreat to stage 3; 2 and 3 were actually incompatible.

With the Soviet Union, it was always a matter of black or white, there being no middle gray. And every indication was that the prospects of the conversation were black.

On June 3, 1945, as though on a casual visit, Hirota called upon Mr. Malik, the youthful Soviet ambassador, at Gora, a hot spring at Hakone, and expressed the desire of our government to promote a better understanding with the Soviet Union "for the preservation of the stability of the Far East."

The next day Hirota was a guest at dinner at the ambassador's hotel. Over coffee and liqueurs Hirota deftly sounded out the ambassador's reaction to his proposal for establishing solid relations of friendship between Japan and Russia that would secure peace for generations, by replacing the neutrality pact, recently denounced by the Soviet government. Malik, after making some observations

about the influence of the anti-Soviet elements in Japan, undertook to give serious consideration to this proposal. He said that although the Soviet Union had consistently pursued a peaceful policy, it was forced into a war by German aggression. In Asia, too, his country had endeavored to promote friendly relations with Japan but had failed of the desired result because of strong opposition in Japan to a rapprochement with the Soviet Union. This fact, the ambassador added, was responsible for the sense of insecurity prevailing between the two countries.

Hirota replied that such an attitude toward the Soviet Union, if it really ever existed, had disappeared, and that the Japanese people now had a lively appreciation of the USSR. This, in his view, would facilitate the improvement of Soviet-Japanese relations. The conversation did not have any appreciable success, but Hirota submitted an optimistic report to the foreign minister. Pressed by the latter, Hirota sought a fortnight later to pursue the talk. But Malik declined to receive the veteran diplomat, pleading "indisposition."

Meanwhile a full-dress meeting of the Supreme War Council was quite abruptly convened on June 6, at the instance of the Army, to discuss "the fundamental policy of prosecuting the war." The council was ostensibly to "discuss" the submitted policy but actually it was expected to endorse it without modification. The council, in its full session, consisted of twelve individuals of whom only three were civilians. This included Suzuki who was, it seemed, still vacillating between peace and war.

It was singular that the Army should have kept the matter secret until the last moment. It had not, even informally, notified the Foreign Office representative accredited to the secretariat of the council. The foreign minister did not know anything about the meeting until he received a summons on its eve. Obviously the Army wanted to surprise the Foreign Office, which it no longer trusted.

The staff officers of the Army and Navy had been closeted in secret discussions for some time past. The policy they shaped was to regiment the nation for an all-out war on the mainland of Japan. They took this line for the following reasons:

First, they wanted to commit the new cabinet irrevocably to a war to the finish.

Second, they wanted to bolster public morale in preparation for a belated announcement of the loss of Okinawa. They could no longer delay this. They planned to make it before the extraordinary session of the Diet which was scheduled to meet on June 7.

Third, they wanted further to augment their dictatorial power by instituting various far-reaching reforms. As a means to this, they schemed, as already stated, to invest the government with emergency powers to legislate at pleasure without the consent of the Diet.

Accordingly the armed forces presented to the imperial conference a statement of their proposed policy. It said in conclusion:

Inspired as we are by the utmost patriotism which demands superb sacrifices, we pledge ourselves to prosecute the war fully, regardless of the difficulties involved. Conscious also of the advantages afforded by our geographical position and the harmonious cooperation of our fellow countrymen, we shall endeavor to attain our high war aim which is to preserve our unique national structure and safeguard our sacred fatherland.

They submitted two other documents at the same time. One was entitled "Appraisal of the Current World Situation" and gloomily described the grim international situation confronting Japan. The other was "The Present State of Material Power." It revealed clearly the shocking depletion of our war materials. The "Appraisal" hysterically proclaimed that "Our Empire must speedily enforce vigorous political and military measures, steeled by an inflexible determination and enhanced by a fighting spirit sure of ultimate triumph, and must attempt the utmost in grasping the divine moment of decisive victory." This was really a masterpiece composed in bedlam! Line after line of such bombast followed, testifying to the frantic state of mind of the men who drafted it. The titan was raving at the fever's height. Like Prometheus, the Army was driven by despair into frenzy.

There is a well-known legend about a Chinese merchant who tried at the same time to sell a shield and a spear. The shield, he told his customer, was of such quality that no spear could ever pierce it. When the customer asked for a spear, the merchant took one out of his armory and assured him serenely that there was no

shield it could not pierce. The customer turned away dumb-founded.

The position of our army men was exactly similar to that of the legendary merchant. While on the one hand they maintained that there were yet chances of victory, on the other hand they virtually confessed the impossibility of carrying on the struggle. Their own handiwork, "The Present State of Material Power," made the dilemma quite plain. This document revealed the utter hopelessness of our situation. The Supreme Council, however, without a single dissenting voice, adopted a statement that it was imperative "by August or September fully to enforce various vigorous measures calculated to maintain at least the minimum fighting strength."

Two days later the policy proposed by the Army was formally sanctioned at the imperial conference held in the presence of the Emperor: this conference lasted only a little over fifteen minutes. Never, indeed, had I been so deeply shocked as by this sinister development. If such were to be the decision of the Supreme Council, what good was there in continuing endeavors for peace? Yet there was, it seemed, one saving grace about the decision of the imperial conference. For it logically implied that if those so-called vigorous measures did not, by the end of the summer, produce the urgently needed sinews of war in sufficient quantities—which would have been a miracle—then at last the war effort must be abandoned. Aerial attacks were already increasing daily in intensity, devastating our industrial centers and completely disrupting the supply of munitions. Strategic bombing was now taking the form of incendiary raids which overnight wholly destroyed poorly defended industrial towns. With the military situation rapidly becoming aggravated beyond retrieve there was no hope, even for the most sanguine, of executing the unrealistic program prepared by the Planning Board.

Outwardly though, the Army had succeeded in stealing a march upon the peace party. Now that the policy of fighting to the bitter end had received imperial sanction, it was proclaimed to the nation through the Diet in order to regiment men's minds. The militarists were riding high and the Diet meekly submitted to their will, passing a bill investing the government with extensive emergency powers.

This Wartime Emergency Measure had been prepared by the Koiso cabinet toward the end of March, i.e., shortly before its fall. The bill was taken up by the Suzuki cabinet and submitted to the Diet. After sharp discussions in which some Diet members criticized the bill as unconstitutional, it became a law and was promulgated on June 22, 1945. It was a far-reaching measure, concentrating vast power in the government which could freely make decrees with the force of law, without the consent of the Diet, in respect to:

1. The initiation or discontinuance of business enterprises and the punishment of employees.
2. The organization of business enterprises.
3. The regulation of labor, materials, power, and land.
4. The utilization, expansion, improvement, etc., of land, structures, standing trees, equipment, and facilities.
5. The acquisition, loss, revision, and utilization of rights.
6. The establishment of juristic persons.
7. The regulation of contract payments and receipt of prices and wages and other pecuniary benefits.
8. The movements and residence of persons.
9. The collection and inspection of reports.
10. The application of laws.
11. Other items to be decided upon by competent state ministers and the prime minister.

The law provided for the creation of a wartime emergency measures committee. Originally the bill provided that the government should report matters to this committee, but the law as enacted provided that the committee should be consulted by the government. This much was conceded to the Diet in order to save its face.

When the bill passed the Diet Shimada, the veteran speaker of the House of Representatives, made a speech thanking the members for their cooperation and said, "While some are apt to think that the law means the transfer of powers entrusted to the Diet to the government and that the Diet is no longer needed, I do not subscribe to this view." As a matter of fact, the Diet did no longer exist after it had passed this extraordinary bill, a bill comparable to the legislation conferring despotic powers on the English King Henry VIII by his terrified parliament.

Together with this Wartime Emergency Measure another bill was presented to the Diet which affected the life of the entire nation. That was the National Volunteer Fighting Corps Bill, which envisaged the induction of the entire male population into military service. This also became law on June 22. As the army spokesman explained at the time, this bill perfected "the empire's structure to fight the invading enemy through the watertight cooperation of the government, the military, and the people." The corps was patterned after the Volkswehr of Nazi Germany; and the bill was intended to make virtually the whole nation a hostage of the military. Every citizen capable of military duty was henceforward to be put under control of the Army as a soldier. At the same time the female population was also being organized as a volunteer corps to serve with the Army or to work in munitions factories. The entire country thus became a military barracks. The nation lived under the iron discipline of what Taine once called the barrack philosophy.

A Chinese proverb says: One who rides a tiger cannot alight. The Army was riding an angry tiger.

An Empire for Sale

I

THE TIGER ran away. The Army got frightened in the end. One who sows the dragon's teeth must reap the whirlwind.

On the very day of the imperial conference, June 8, 1945, Kido, lord privy seal, made up his mind to shoot the tiger, or rather to shoot at the Army which was riding the tiger. Kido drew up a confidential memorandum setting forth in bold terms the urgent necessity of terminating the war immediately. Through Matsudaira, his private secretary, he invited me to state my views upon this memorandum which was to the following effect:

1. Okinawa seems now to be doomed, its fall being imminent.
2. The report on "The Present State of Material Power," which was submitted to the imperial conference, shows clearly that by the latter half of the year this country will lose practically all its ability to pursue the war.
3. It is easy for the enemy to overrun all our towns and villages one by one, depriving the nation of all food, clothing, and shelter. The destruction of these necessities of life will certainly cause widespread unrest among the people, who will be subjected to untold miseries by the advent of the cold season. It is feared that the situation, if left unchecked, will prove difficult to ameliorate. Therefore it is of paramount importance that a courageous step be taken at this critical juncture to terminate hostilities without delay.
4. As it is plain that the principal aim of the enemy powers is to bring about the downfall of the military clique, it is desirable that the Army should request peace and that the government should shape policies accordingly, in order to open diplomatic negotiations. But it is also plain that in the prevailing circumstances this is entirely out of the question. Should we, however, wait idly until an opportunity for action presents itself we would be too late and the maintenance of the

imperial house and of our national structure would become altogether impossible. Consequently we must now appeal to the throne for guidance in ending the war quickly.

5. I propose therefore humbly to submit the following for the august consideration of the sovereign:

A. An envoy should be dispatched to Moscow entrusted with a personal message from the Emperor. Since no direct negotiations with the United States and Great Britain are as yet feasible, it will be better to solicit the good offices of the Soviet government as a go-between.

B. The Imperial message will embody His Majesty's cherished desire to restore peace in the larger interests of humanity. Painful though it is for us to sue for peace, it has become necessary in order to save mankind from the miseries of prolonged warfare.

C. We should be content with the imposed terms of peace so long as they are compatible with the national honor. If the Pacific Ocean could be made really peaceful, true to its name, we should be satisfied with such terms as would secure the independence of our nation. Consequently,

1. we should be prepared to abandon established positions of influence over the people in the occupied regions;
2. we should voluntarily withdraw our overseas expeditionary forces;
3. we should be content with the minimum armaments sufficient for our national defense.

It may not be irrelevant to recall here that Kido was regarded as the key man in bringing about the reorientation of our national policy. Prince Konoye who was the acknowledged leader of the peace party was of the opinion that the short cut to this reorientation was the establishment of a working partnership between Kido and Suzuki, the prime minister. He himself, he said, was looked upon as a Badoglio and so were those other workers for peace, Okada and Wakatsuki; therefore it was wiser for him and his colleagues to refrain from approaching the throne. They should not at this time accede to the growing demand on the part of a section of the public that the jushin come out into the open and help to reorient the national policy. The prince said that since Kido was firmly determined to see the thing through even at the cost of his own life the most sensible course was to let him assist the Emperor in assuming the leadership of a bold movement for an

early peace. Kido and Konoye had been intimate friends from their school days and the two by this time were working hand in glove. Kido was in fact quite ready to assume full responsibility for an eventual surrender. He had been waiting for a propitious moment to strike and he now struck with vigor.

It is said that in wine one reveals one's true self. Perhaps it is also true that one shows as much of oneself in sports. Kido plays golf occasionally. His game is not particularly good but it is extremely steady. For one thing his nerves never give way. He always plays in a confident and consistent manner which is often irritating and sometimes even antagonizing to his partners. So steady and stable is his game that on the links he earned the nickname "Kido the clock." Kido is indeed a very fine clock, exact to a second. He never goes fast or slow. His pace is never irregular. In this he differs greatly from Konoye. Furthermore, Konoye was an idealist but Kido is a realist. Konoye was constantly chasing the rainbow but Kido never bothers to look at one. Konoye was easily attracted by newfangled ideas but Kido seldom trusts them. Konoye moved perpetually in the limelight of publicity but Kido invariably works behind the scenes. In short, Konoye was colorful but Kido is colorless. Precisely because of the contrast in their characters, there developed between them a very happy partnership.

Kido's aloofness, which verges on a lack of amiability, has created many enemies who are busily weaving a cobweb of fanciful legends around him. He is often criticized as an opportunist, guided less by his conscience than by his ambition. In particular, he is held responsible for recommending Tojo in October, 1941, to follow Konoye as prime minister. As it was Tojo who wrecked the Konoye cabinet by torpedoing the Tokyo-Washington parley, I felt considerably puzzled as to why Kido supported him at that very crucial moment. I now understand that Kido, rightly or wrongly, believed that Tojo was the only man who could control the Army. Kido it seems, believed he could appease the Army through Tojo and thought he could win Tojo over to peace. Kido writes in his diary that when Tojo was recommended to the throne the Emperor said, "So you want to counteract poison by the use of poison?" As my association with Kido has been brief and only

of an official character, I do not pretend to know him well. Neither do I desire to hold any brief for him. But during the turbulent days preceding the termination of hostilities I had ample opportunity to observe the man at close quarters. His previous record or reputation, whatever it is, should not in fairness be allowed to detract from the meritorious service he rendered to the cause of peace during that highly critical period.

According to his diary Kido was at this time reading Viscount Grey's *Twenty-five Years*. What was it that made him turn to this book? He was also reading a biography of Baron Goto, a distinguished statesman of the Meiji era. Goto was once the mayor of Tokyo. When he accepted this commonplace office he said, according to his biographer, "I would like to sacrifice myself once in a lifetime by drawing a blank."¹ Repeating this passage in his diary, Kido wrote, "This is exactly how I feel now." Kido in striking at the Army must have believed also that he was embracing the chance to serve the public cause by sacrificing himself. The Army at this time was engaged in the wholesale suppression of public opinion. Anybody suspected of peaceful inclinations was liable to arrest and imprisonment. Yoshida, until recently prime minister, was a case in point. He was put in prison on a charge of conspiracy against the Tojo cabinet. So were my friends Sunkichi Uyeda, a former attorney general, Iwabuchi, a noted publicist, and Watanabe, president of the Toho Motion Picture Company. But the Army overlooked one important "peacemonger"—the lord privy seal.

The sentiments expressed in Kido's memorandum were based upon his personal convictions but they were at the same time the reflection of the Emperor's growing concern for peace. Kido had judiciously kept himself in the background, contenting himself with the role of a vigilant adviser to the throne. Now he suddenly discarded this habitual attitude and vigorously challenged the militarists. The imperial conference, by means of which the Army forced upon the reluctant government the full prosecution of the war, provided this opportunity for an open revolt. The complete

1. Yusuke Tsurumi, *Goto Shimpei* (Goto Shimpei Haku Denki Hensankai, 1937-38), IV, 203. (I am indebted to my colleague, Professor Chitoshi Yanaga, for this reference. Ed.)

madness of the Army, coupled with the utter hopelessness of the situation, produced such a terrific impact upon Kido that he could not but revolt. Viewed in the light of later developments this notorious imperial conference proved chiefly instrumental in expediting the restoration of peace. This was indeed ironical in the extreme.

On June 12, 1945, I discussed the situation with Prince Konoye at Sotei, his summer residence in Karuizawa. The prince, greatly alarmed, hurried back to Tokyo to consult with Kido. Next day Kido submitted his memorandum to Yonai, the navy minister, and Prime Minister Suzuki. He then invited Foreign Minister Togo to the palace and exchanged views on the measures to be taken. Later Kido discussed the memorandum with Anami, the war minister, and prevailed upon him to acknowledge the necessity of terminating the war.

In his affidavit Kido relates the circumstances as follows:

With my tentative peace plan being decided as shown above, I showed it to Chief Secretary Matsudaira the next day, that is, June 9, 1945, and had a full exchange of views with him on it. Prior to this I had been secretly in touch with Mr. Kase of the Foreign Office and Colonel Matsutani of the War Ministry through Chief Secretary Matsudaira in connection with peace moves or measures for terminating the war. If my tentative peace plan was to be put into practice, therefore, it was necessary to seek their views. So I asked Chief Secretary Matsudaira to get in touch with them immediately. At 1:30 P.M. the same day I had an audience with the Emperor at which I fully reported to His Majesty on my tentative peace plan and obtained imperial sanction to consult the prime minister, and the three ministers—war, navy, and foreign affairs—upon it. His Majesty, who was as deeply concerned as anybody else over the adverse developments of the war situation, was satisfied with my memorial, especially since His Majesty grieved that many medium and small towns were reduced to ashes by bombing attacks one after another in quick succession, with a large number of innocent people being rendered homeless. His Majesty commanded me to set my hand to the tentative peace plan immediately. My diary of June 9, 1945, states:

"June 9, 1945. At 11 A.M. I had a full exchange of views with Chief Secretary Matsudaira on the countermeasures against the pending national crisis. From 1:30 to 2 P.M. I had an audience with the Emperor at the Gobundo (library) when I fully reported to the throne on the

measures for saving the national situation. His Majesty was pleased to tell me his intentions.

"The Diet happened to be in session, so that Prime Minister Suzuki and all other cabinet ministers were very busy. So I refrained from approaching them with the peace plan. It was on June 13, 1945, the day when the Diet was formally closed, that I had talks with Prime Minister Suzuki and Navy Minister Yonai about the peace plan."

After a few days I offered my comments on the Kido memorandum. I said among other things:

1. Since it is likely that we will have to terminate hostilities by unconditional surrender, or on terms virtually similar to that, we must be prepared to accept this fact in embarking upon diplomatic negotiations and must take necessary measures on the home front in anticipation of the worst. Consequently "the peace with honor" envisaged by the lord privy seal is too optimistic, being incompatible with the grim realities.

2. We may conduct diplomatic negotiations either directly with the enemy powers or through neutral countries. Logically speaking, the direct course is simpler, but the Army will not countenance it, as it will involve a loss of face on its part. On the other hand the minor neutral countries are of limited influence. Therefore Moscow seems to offer a convenient channel. However, to rely on the Soviet Union at this critical juncture, when the very fate of our nation hangs by a thread, may, as some point out, be liable to cause later complications by introducing subversive influences into the highly complex and combustible situation. It is in a sense like crossing a dangerous bridge. But as there is no other way we are obliged to risk it. Only it seems wiser to approach Great Britain and the United States also at a later stage in a propitious moment in order to counterbalance the Soviet influence by conducting a parallel negotiation.

I suggested such parallel conversations because it appeared most likely that soon after the collapse of Germany the triangular war-time cooperation of Moscow, Washington, and London would cease or lose much of its warmth. It was the German menace that brought the three powers into their otherwise anomalous alliance. After all, communism and capitalism made strange bed-fellows. Their alliance, at best a marriage de convenance, was not born of any mutual enthusiasms. The uncomfortable feeling of the

capitalist was aptly expressed by Churchill's characteristic remark:

If I were about to be engaged in mortal combat with a man-eating tiger, and at the decisive moment saw that a crocodile was ready to bite off the tiger's tail, I should welcome the presence of the crocodile, even though I had previously had no particular affection for it—and even though I might perhaps feel no particular affection for it when it was all over.

Once Germany, the common enemy, was vanquished, there remained, it seemed, scarcely any reason for the continuation of this strange alliance. It was liable to be replaced by old rivalries that had embarrassed their relations for centuries. If such were to be the case, the astute leaders at the Kremlin would probably try to establish the Soviet's influence in the Far East by capturing Japan, now on the verge of a final collapse. This would not, however, be tolerated by the United States, which bore the main burden in reducing Japan. There was a chance, therefore, that the United States might checkmate the possibly far-reaching Russian designs upon us. But as American sentiment against Japan was very hostile we could not approach her directly lest we should meet a sharp rebuff. Such a rebuff would only play into the hands of the military, who would then feel justified in prolonging the war. In these circumstances I myself thought that England offered a more natural channel. For had not Japan and England once been allied for nearly a quarter of a century? Moreover, England still maintained her monarchy and should be desirous of saving as many crowns as possible. Since our paramount concern was the preservation of the monarchical system, it was most appropriate, I concluded, to appeal to London at a suitable moment.

In this connection it would not be wholly irrelevant to recall my conversation with Sir Robert Craigie, British ambassador, late in July, 1942. It was on the eve of Sir Robert's return home by the exchange ship. I called upon Sir Robert and Lady Craigie to wish them bon voyage. I also brought them a farewell message and a gift from Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Chichibu. Prince Chichibu is the Emperor's younger brother. This was not the first time that the prince had, through me, sent personal gifts to the ambassador and his wife. As the ambassador and his

staff were interned in the embassy compound under close guard by the vigilant military police, it was difficult for me to execute this delicate mission. It was the same with the American embassy where I secretly went occasionally to visit Mr. Grew on similar errands. Although this was sometimes difficult, I always felt happy to serve as a messenger of good will for those few who wanted me to take friendly gifts to the two embassies.

On my last visit to the British embassy, however, I was entrusted by Foreign Minister Togo with a highly confidential message. I was instructed to give Sir Robert a discreet hint regarding the eventual restoration of peace. After a friendly chat I introduced the subject with all the tact at my command and said, "Should it happen that the British government became desirous of discussing or negotiating peace they would find the Japanese government ready to be helpful." Sir Robert took it calmly. He said that he felt convinced England would finally emerge victorious but the hazards of war were usually such that it was humanly impossible to make a forecast. Anyway, once the issue of war became clear, it would be foolish to continue the bloodshed. God only knew if he might ever be called upon to avail himself of this suggestion. However, for the present he would like to keep the message to himself alone, since it might be misunderstood by his government to mean Japan was advising Britain to surrender. I confess I do not know what Sir Robert did with this confidential message. Most probably he did nothing—for by the time of his return home the tide of war had changed drastically in favor of the democratic powers.

But that is not the point. I desire to state the fact that even as early as the summer of 1942 we few in the Foreign Office were endeavoring to lay foundations for future negotiations with England. Only we did not know then that after the lapse of three years Japan would find herself in such a desperate plight. Shigemitsu also tried during 1944 to establish contact with the British government through Sir Samuel Hoare in Madrid, but his efforts bore no fruit as our legation there did not prove helpful.

Although there were some who obstinately insisted on coming to a settlement with the Chinese government at Chungking as a preliminary to peace with Great Britain and the United States, I did not subscribe to their view. I was extremely skeptical of such

efforts, holding it most improbable that they would bear fruit. Apart from the Cairo declaration by which China undertook not to conclude a separate peace, she was now inseparably bound up with Great Britain and the United States, from which nations it was apparently impossible to wean her. Even if it were possible it would take considerable time and would not meet our requirements, which were desperately urgent. Moreover the Chinese people believe in the justifiability of revolution, as witnessed by numerous changes of dynasty during their history. Had not Dr. Sun Fo of the Chungking regime recently favored the abolition of the monarchy in Japan? Did he not say that it was necessary to "puncture the myth of the divinity of the Mikado?" I dismissed the idea of relying upon Chungking.

One further word must be said here about the peace efforts vis-à-vis Chungking. Ever since the outbreak of hostilities in China in 1937 there had been numerous attempts at patching up peace with Chiang Kai-shek. Without exception these attempts were shrouded in deep mystery. They were mostly handled by so-called experts on China who, in spite of their professed honesty, often made a thriving business of it. The most notorious case of all, as readers will recall, was the Miaoping affair which took place toward the end of the Koiso administration.

2

After consultations with Kido Togo succeeded in impressing upon Suzuki the necessity of convening the six original members of the Supreme War Council at once in order to adjust the views of the government and the Supreme Command. The council met on June 18 in utmost secrecy and agreed that

Although we have no choice but to continue the war so long as the enemy insists upon unconditional surrender, we deem it advisable, while we still possess considerable power of resistance, to propose peace through neutral powers, especially the Soviet Union, and to obtain terms which will at least ensure the preservation of our monarchy.

With that in mind, we entrust it to the foreign minister to ascertain the Soviet attitude by the beginning of July with a view to terminating the war if possible by September,

The war minister and the chiefs of staff argued that it would be better to start diplomatic negotiations after they had dealt a decisive blow to the enemy. But they finally agreed to the above decision.

This meant that an early cessation of hostilities by diplomatic negotiation was agreed upon in principle. A great stride had been taken toward the restoration of peace. The next day, June 19, 1945, Togo paid a secret visit to Hirota at the latter's seaside villa at Kugenuma, some forty miles from Tokyo. He requested Hirota to redouble his efforts and to push on the conversations with the Soviet ambassador in order to obtain peace terms other than unconditional surrender. It was necessary to secure peace terms before the Big Three meeting which was believed to be imminent. When Togo reported to the throne his interview with Hirota the Emperor approved his action and further commanded him to do his utmost to terminate the war speedily.

Meanwhile we urged Kido to advise the Emperor to receive the six council members and urge them to strive harder for the restoration of peace. On June 22, 1945, the six were summoned to the imperial presence. The Emperor expressed lively concern about the rapid deterioration of the situation both at home and abroad. He earnestly enjoined the Supreme War Council to intensify its endeavors and devise means for terminating hostilities in spite of, and unencumbered by, the earlier decisions of the imperial conference of June 6, 1945, which had envisaged the full prosecution of the war. Prime Minister Suzuki bowed low and firmly pledged his efforts for peace. Navy Minister Yonai said that the council was already pursuing this course in dealing with the Soviet government. Togo thereupon explained developments in detail. He stressed the advisability, or rather the necessity, of initiating the peace offer before our strength was exhausted. There were, he added, several neutral channels logically available. Of these Vatican City and the Swiss government were keeping more or less aloof from international complications, while an approach through the Swedish government would be likely to meet a rebuff from the enemy powers. Chungking being out of the question, there remained only the Soviet Union. So, in spite of inherent dangers, Togo concluded, we had to rely on the Kremlin.

Umezu, army chief of staff, dissented, observing that the proffer

of peace should be made only after careful deliberation, as its repercussions would be far-reaching. The Emperor instantly took the general to task, reminding him that time was short. Abashed, the general avowed that he did not mean that he opposed peace. He even conceded the urgency of the situation. This meant that the decision of June 6 to continue the war was to be nullified. After all, that decision had been forced upon the government by the military without any mature deliberation.

There is a precedent of an imperial conference decision being reversed later. The outstanding example of it is that of September 6, 1941. As already stated, this decision envisaged the inevitability of a war with the United States and Great Britain unless the diplomatic negotiations then in progress between Tokyo and Washington should have produced the prospect of an amicable conclusion by the beginning of October. The Konoye cabinet fell on account of this decision and was succeeded by the Tojo cabinet. When Tojo was installed as the prime minister the Emperor commanded him specifically to regard the decision as nullified and hence not binding on the future course of negotiations with America.

It was by coincidence, on this day of the imperial conference, June 22, that the United States formally announced the occupation of the island of Okinawa. Our acknowledgment of the loss of Okinawa was as usual delayed. It was made on June 26 when the government issued an "Instruction to the Nation." This was followed by a broadcast by the prime minister.

After confessing the fact that the defense of Okinawa could no longer be maintained, the instruction exhorted the whole people to sacrifice their lives for the fatherland. It further said:

Yet the damage we have inflicted upon the enemy on Okinawa has not only been immense, causing a miscarriage in the execution of his strategic plans, but has also dealt him a severe spiritual blow.

It is believed that the air raids will be further intensified and we must also expect an invasion of Japan proper. Now, indeed, is the time to decide the rise or fall of the empire, our country being confronted with the gravest crisis since the Mongol invasion. . . . How can we ever permit the sacred land to be outraged by a foreign foe?

But our strategic operations have already been decided and measures to increase our fighting strength are daily progressing with the organization of the National Volunteer Fighting Corps. . . .

A very clumsy statement this was, even though it was obviously meant for domestic consumption. To make the matter worse, Suzuki amplified it in a radio address, saying that "enemy losses in men on Okinawa have reached several times the number on our side while the losses in ships have been more than ten times those on our side. Altogether, we dealt a tremendous moral blow to the enemy." "Who," he asked "will not be filled with confidence of victory when we think of the hundred million people impressively marshaling themselves in their respective fields of occupation, and upon the battlefields as well, for the sake of the country?"

This was uncalled for, to say the least. Such an utterance was not only nonsense but extremely harmful. It impeded the work of restoring peace. At such a time I could not help but wonder whether the mind of the prime minister was really set on peace. He was like a man who was trying simultaneously to be both an incendiary and a fire fighter.

Earlier, on June 24, 1945, Hirota called upon the Soviet ambassador for the third time. He explained at length the earnest desire of our government to make a drastic improvement in the relations of the two countries and to remove barriers to good understanding. He touched on various questions such as Manchuria, China, the South Sea regions,² and suggested that the two powers should replace the neutrality pact by a new treaty, under which they should adjust and advance their interests in the Orient and pledge mutual support. Hirota jestingly suggested that the combination of the Japanese Navy and the Russian Army would produce an invincible alliance. Malik, however, showed indifference, stating that he could not take action unless the suggestion took a more definite form. Consequently, on June 29 Hirota saw Malik at the Soviet embassy in Tokyo for the fourth and last time. This time he formally proposed to "Conclude a nonaggression pact pledging mutual support in order to establish an enduring cordial friendship between Japan and the Soviet Union, thereby contributing toward the preservation of a permanent peace in East Asia."³

He also stated that the Japanese government was prepared to neutralize Manchuria. When the Pacific war was terminated, Japan

2. The Soviet government was believed interested in acquiring raw materials from these regions, such as rubber, tin, lead, and tungsten.

3. Source unavailable. (Ed.)

would withdraw her troops from Manchuria, and Japan and the Soviet Union would undertake to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Manchukuo. Japan would also abandon the fishery concessions off the coast of Soviet Asia in return for a certain quantity of oil to be supplied by the Russians. Hirota added that the Japanese government would not be averse to discussing frankly any and all questions in which the Soviet government was interested. This was in fact tantamount to issuing a blank check to the Russians. Hirota asked the ambassador to transmit this proposal to his home government. Without apparent enthusiasm Malik promised to dispatch a report to Moscow by the regular courier. This meant that the report would make a painfully slow journey across Siberia. This was like waiting for a fire brigade while a conflagration raged, without being at all sure when and whether help would come. Incidentally Malik asked Hirota if it was true that the Japanese government was conducting peace negotiations at Stockholm. Hirota denied it, saying that Japan would first consult the Soviet government in such matters. Hirota took leave of the ambassador with the understanding that he would renew the conversation as soon as the embassy received a reply from Moscow. After waiting some days Hirota again requested an interview but the ambassador declined once more to receive him, on the pretext of illness. Thus the conversations ended without leading anywhere.⁴

The whole episode was like angling in waters where no fish lived.

By this time rumors were rife concerning the impending Potsdam meeting, which actually began on July 17. On July 7 the Emperor in anxiety sent for the elderly prime minister and urged him to make haste. He said in conclusion: "We may miss a precious opportunity while we are trying to ascertain the attitude of the Soviet Union. It would be better to ask outright the good offices of the Soviet government for the restoration of peace, and to that end to dispatch a special envoy at once entrusted with the imperial message." On July 10 Suzuki convened the Supreme War Council of six, again in strict secrecy, and conveyed the imperial command that no time should be lost in dispatching an emissary to Moscow.

4. Ambassador Sato twice saw Molotov in connection with the Hirota-Malik conversation and found the foreign commissar entirely indifferent to it.

The council, in obedience to the Emperor's wish, decided that Prince Konoye should be sent to Moscow. On July 12 the Emperor summoned Konoye and personally entrusted him with the mission for peace.

Kido writes in his diary that Konoye's audience took place at 3 P.M. and lasted only a quarter of an hour. The Emperor told Kido that Konoye concurred in his views regarding the necessity of terminating hostilities and accepted the appointment with enthusiasm. He added that he would stake his life on the execution of the mission.

Later the prince called at my house and asked me to accompany him on his journey to Moscow. He added, however, that he hesitated to ask me, as the members of the mission would surely fall victims to the violence of the ultranationalists who were intent upon continuing the war at any cost. I of course said that I would deem it an honor to join the mission. The prince remarked that he had seen the Emperor often in the past but that he had never been so deeply impressed as at this audience by the earnest solicitude of the sovereign for the welfare of his people.

Konoye had told the Emperor, in reply to his question, that he considered the war as good as lost. The people's morale was quickly deteriorating, their only remaining hope being that the Emperor might do something for them in some way or other.

The prince in his call on me was accompanied by his charming wife. He told me quietly that he would be happy to sacrifice his life if, by doing so, he could save the nation and make amends for his past faults and errors. He had certainly made many errors. He was prime minister at the time of the outbreak of the China incident in July, 1937. Although he was thoroughly opposed to armed intervention on the continent, the incident soon developed into a full-scale war. Time and again he had tried in vain to compose the dispute amicably through diplomatic means. He felt deeply responsible for his failures.

Again he was prime minister when the Axis alliance was concluded. He subscribed to this treaty in the belief that the Soviet Union would adhere to it. In this he was mistaken. Instead of promoting peace the alliance aggravated our relations with the democratic powers. Thereupon he began negotiations with the United States in a drastic effort to improve our relations with that

country. Because of the obstruction of the Army, this too ended in failure, finally precipitating the war. Konoye knew that he was largely blamed for this misfortune also. Count Ciano, the Italian foreign minister, after all was right when he confided to his diary his secret doubts as to the wisdom of extending the Axis pact to the Far East by including Japan. He was fearful lest it might provoke America.

I came to know Konoye intimately only toward the end of the war, beginning some time in 1944. I do not claim to know his motives and part in the major events that took place before the war. But during the last two or three years of his life I saw him often, enjoying a cordial friendship with him. I confess, therefore, that my assessment of Konoye is considerably influenced by prejudice.

Even if Konoye's journey to Moscow had proved possible it would have been only another "failure of a mission." Eventually he killed himself by poison one night in December, 1945. The next morning he was to have been taken to jail as one of the war criminal suspects. Near his deathbed was an open copy of Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*. Such passages as the following were underlined:

I must say to myself that I ruined myself, and that nobody great or small can be ruined except by his own hand. I am quite ready to say so. I am trying to say so, though they may not think it at the present moment. This pitiless indictment I bring without pity against myself. Terrible as was what the world did to me, what I did to myself was far more terrible still. . . .

People used to say of me that I was too individualistic. . . . My ruin came not from too great individualism of life but from too little.⁵

Prince Konoye was only fifty-four years old when he committed suicide. He left a note that said:

I have made many political blunders since the China incident, for which I feel deep responsibility, but it is unbearable to me to be tried in an American court as a so-called war criminal. Since I felt responsibility for the China incident, I arrived at the conclusion that the only way left for the settlement of the China incident was to seek an understanding with the United States, and I have made my utmost effort for the negotiations with the United States. It is regrettable that I was

5. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1905, pp. 9, 108. (Ed.)

suspected as a war criminal. I believe God knows what my intention was. I believe that even in America there are some friends who understood me. The excitement and resentment that accompany war, an excess of boastfulness by the victors and extreme servility and intentionally false accusations by the loser, and rumors due to misunderstanding—all these things together form public opinion; but I believe so-called public opinion will calm down and return to normalcy. Then I hope that in the court of God a judgment of justice will be given to me.⁶

My poor friend, he could not and would not face the humiliation of imprisonment. Like Wilde he must have felt that the laws under which he was accused were wrong and that the system under which he had suffered was unjust. So he preferred to receive a judgment of justice in the court of God.

By coincidence I lost my aged mother on the same day, and so I could not go to the prince's home until much later. But when I heard of the sad episode of Wilde's book I could not help feeling a peculiar shock. It was the book I had given the prince several months earlier. Had Konoye been contemplating suicide? It happened that I celebrated New Year's day of 1945 with him at Atami, a hot spring resort. We were determined to enjoy ourselves, in the consciousness that we could not count upon a tomorrow which might never come. And we did enjoy ourselves. Suddenly Konoye asked me what was the best way to commit suicide. He wanted to avoid bloodshed and did not like pain either. Also he would rather not disfigure himself. We agreed that poison was the obvious choice. Then, after a while, the prince asked in seeming irrelevancy if my library happened to contain Wilde's *De Profundis*. I said it did, and promised to send him a copy.

Konoye was an improviser who desperately tried expedient after expedient in his struggle against fate. But fate always proved too strong for him. In his frequent melancholy moments he would tell me that he could neither eat nor sleep. Such were the agonies he suffered when he felt the crushing sense of responsibility for the lost war. He renounced his title and privileges. He wanted to turn over a new leaf as an ordinary man. But his hope was frustrated; his past overtook him. His footsteps on the pages of history could

6. For a supposedly verbatim version of this note, differing largely in detailed wording from the above, see *New York Times* (December 17, 1945), p. 2. (Ed.)

not be erased. He could not bear the thought of imprisonment. Life became for him an intolerable burden. Finally he succumbed to his unending sorrows. "I ended in horrible disgrace. There is only one thing for me now, absolute humility." After reading these lines of Wilde's ⁷ again and again, he took his life.

I have come in frequent contact with most of the jushin, but none of them, I believe, surpassed Konoye in zeal for the welfare of the country. In the later years of his life he grew much in stature as a statesman, his views and vision having been considerably widened through the war years. During the war he carefully and consistently avoided the burden of office although there was a constant pressure to harness him in the services of the state. Yet his open concern for the future of the unfortunate nation was sincere. He often sent for me to ask about international developments, particularly those concerning the Soviet Union. He seemed to suspect Russia of harboring dark designs. He thoroughly feared and detested communism and was apprehensive lest it might make grave inroads into Japan, upsetting our entire political and social structure, including the so-called Tenno system.⁸

It was, perhaps, out of such a fear that he more than once asked me whether there was any way by which he might fly to the United States. He would talk personally to President Roosevelt and solicit his personal intervention for peace! I told him in reply that that would only make him an object of universal mockery—another Hess, in short. In his mind, I knew, the idea of a heart-to-heart talk with the president remained an obsession. For he could never quite forget the abortive project of a rendezvous with the president which he had planned in the middle stages of the American-Japanese negotiations of 1941. He had confidently hoped that in this way he could lead the long, futile negotiations to a happy culmination. That was four months before the outbreak of the war. Moreover, the United States was the only country he had visited in recent years and he felt, it seemed, more at home with the Americans than with other foreigners.⁹

To my knowledge Konoye did not possess any experience in dealing with the Russians. Therefore when he began to prepare

7. *De Profundis*, p. 12. (Ed.)

8. Tenno is a Japanese word for emperor. (Ed.)

9. Konoye had visited the United States in 1934 on a good-will mission, while he was president of the House of Peers.

for his journey to Moscow I suggested to him that he should take with him Shigemitsu, a former ambassador to Moscow and a veteran diplomat well versed in Russian affairs. The suggestion received his ready assent. Soon the members of the mission were secretly selected. It was understood that the party would take off clandestinely from a secret airport, possibly near Takasaki, and fly to Manchuli where, if things went smoothly, a Soviet plane would await us.

3

With the nomination of Konoye, the Foreign Office now began to get busy. Prior to that, however, under instructions from Tokyo on July 11, 1945, Ambassador Sato called upon Foreign Commissar Molotov. Mr. T. V. Soong, president of the Executive Yuan in the Chinese government, had visited Moscow and had repeatedly seen Stalin and Molotov. As a result there had been lively conjectures regarding an impending agreement between the Soviet government and the Chungking government of Chiang Kai-shek. Soong was reportedly accompanied by a staff of some fifty persons. Rumors also arose regarding the possible participation of the Soviet Union in the Far Eastern war. Our government therefore instructed Ambassador Sato to investigate. At the interview Sato tried to sound out the attitude of the Soviet government on the Hirota-Malik conversations, but Molotov was vague, stating that he had not yet received the courier report from Tokyo. Not being adequately informed of the Japanese proposals, he was not in a position to make a reply. As for T. V. Soong's visit, the foreign commissar explained that it was concerned primarily with the question of improving Russo-Chinese relations and had nothing to do with the Hirota-Malik talks.¹⁰ On July 12 Togo dispatched an urgent telegram to Sato instructing him to deliver the following message to the foreign commissar at once:

His Majesty is extremely anxious to terminate the war as soon as possible, being deeply concerned that the further continuation of hostilities will only aggravate the untold miseries of the teeming millions, innocent men and women, of the countries at war. Should, however,

10. T. V. Soong's visit was actually for the purpose of implementing the Yalta agreement of February, 1945. (Ed.)

the United States and Great Britain insist on unconditional surrender, Japan would be forced to fight to the bitter end with all her might in order to vindicate her honor and safeguard her national existence, which, to our intense regret, would entail further bloodshed. Our government therefore desires to negotiate for a speedy restoration of peace, prompted as we sincerely are by solicitude for the welfare of mankind. For this purpose Prince Konoye will proceed to Moscow with the personal message of the Emperor and it is requested that the Soviet government be good enough to accord travel facilities to him.¹¹

On receipt of this important instruction Sato sought an interview with Molotov, but he was received by Rozovsky, vice foreign commissar. Molotov, so it was explained, was busy preparing for his journey to Potsdam. Sato hastened to the Kremlin at 5 P.M. on July 13. The ambassador carried out his instructions faithfully and stated that he would like to receive an assent to our request, if only in principle. To this Rozovsky replied that as the Soviet leaders were on the point of leaving for Germany it was impossible to give an answer before their departure, but he would get in touch with their headquarters in Berlin later. Late that night the Soviet Foreign Office informed Sato that the reply was likely to be delayed as the Soviet delegation had actually left Moscow the same evening. Judging from foreign broadcasts, it was evident that Stalin and Molotov departed for Potsdam after acquainting themselves fully with our proposal. Naturally, therefore, we were much interested as to what attitude Stalin would take toward his allies at the forthcoming conference. However, the fact that Molotov himself did not receive Sato was disappointing.

We were of course entirely ignorant of the secret understanding reached at Yalta in February by which the Soviet Union promised her allies to join the war against Japan in return for territorial concessions. Thus we did not regard it as impossible for the Soviet Union to sell favors to us by playing the role of an honest broker with the United States and Great Britain. Could she not restrain her allies and at the same time, by earning prestige as the mediator of peace, secure a dominant influence in the postwar international situation? This was what we hopefully calculated upon, only to be disappointed.

On July 14, 1945, the six members of the Supreme Council met

to hear Togo's report on the conversation just started at Moscow. Anami, the war minister, observed that Japan was not yet defeated and that consequently we still had freedom to choose terms for peace. Togo, supported by Yonai, the navy minister, replied that we had nevertheless to be prepared for the worst and it was sometimes wiser to bend a while in order to stretch later. At this time powerful American naval task forces were freely navigating the adjacent waters close to our shores, subjecting the mainland to daily attacks from both air and sea. They were entirely unopposed by our forces. People were naturally getting restless and were at a loss to know why the Army and Navy did not counterattack vigorously. Therefore the war minister's contention sounded somewhat hollow. It was a fact, however, that Anami had repeatedly requested the Supreme Command to repulse the enemy. But the latter did not move, on the plausible plea that what airplanes it still possessed had to be conserved for the final encounter which was yet in store. Actually, the Supreme Command was powerless to make any counterattacks.

Anami at first predicted that the enemy would try an assault on our mainland in July. He then put it off to August. It was his desire to deal a smashing blow to the invaders and thereby bring about an advantageous conclusion to the war. The Army, indeed, had prepared an elaborate scheme of strategy, but even the most simple-minded man could see its utter impracticability.

The Supreme Command regarded the Kwanto plain and the island of Kyushu as the two regions most likely to receive the full impact of invasion. According to its calculations the initial invasion would employ some 10 divisions supported by 21 aircraft carriers, 10 battleships, and 350 transports. The strategy of the Army was, within one week, to concentrate forces twice as large as those of the enemy and to destroy two-thirds of the hostile force at sea and on the invasion beaches. The remaining third would be annihilated farther inland.

This was a fairy tale fit only for a nursery rhyme. At the time of the Normandy invasion "impregnable defenses" were garrisoned by a highly mechanized Reichswehr, vastly stronger than our defensive forces. Yet the Allies broke through the solid defense by the sheer weight of their preponderant arms. How could our unfortified shores be effectively defended by ill-equipped and

weary troops? How, under the cruel strafings of aerial bombardments, could we hope to concentrate sufficient forces in time, not to mention forces double the opponent's strength, at a given point? Already our land and water transport was often disrupted by constant air raids. Railroads were being destroyed more rapidly than they could be repaired. Bridges were left unreplaced. There was no use in building new ones which were certain to be destroyed at once. Moreover, we were running out of materials for repairing railroads, highways, and bridges. Suppose the besieging foe did not attempt an immediate landing but instead continued intense bombardment from the air and sea until our communication system crumbled completely? We were entirely isolated, with no help whatsoever coming from outside. The issue was perfectly plain.

Yet Anami, and the army chief of staff, Umezū, insisted on the prosecution of the war. These two generals apparently confused two different matters. It was true that they still possessed power to strike back, but that did not mean that they could wage war successfully. Indeed, even they did not now retain any real confidence in the ultimate outcome of the war.

It may be added here that while Anami agreed to commence negotiations with the Soviet Union he still did not abandon lingering hopes of a compromise with Chiang Kai-shek. It was his pet idea to conclude local truce agreements, to withdraw our troops from south China, and then gradually to enlarge the truce into a full armistice between Japan and China. It was singular, to say the least, that Anami was unaware of the plain fact that the occupied regions behind our extensive China front were being rapidly reduced to chaos.

Some said jestingly that even the Chinese under our occupation were better off than the Japanese at home. The food situation in Japan, for example, was becoming extremely critical. Before the war the Japanese people consumed an average of 2,000 calories daily; but the average fell off to 1,900 in 1944 and to 1,680 by the summer of 1945.¹² It is generally supposed that 2,000 calories a day is the minimum requirement. The liaison conference of March, 1941, decided to secure enough rice from abroad to maintain a minimum nutrition level for the nation. However, by the spring of 1945 ship lanes to the occupied regions had been severed, making

12. USSBS, *Summary Report (Pacific War)*, p. 20. (Ed.)

the importation of food impossible. Shipping fleets remained idle on account of the peril of submarines and air attacks and also on account of the oil shortage. Manpower was drained from the farms as men were hurriedly called to the colors to defend the homeland. The effect of lack of fertilizers was also becoming increasingly evident.

At the beginning of July, 1945, the ration of staple food had to be reduced to 294 grams of rice daily. Incidentally it was common for the people to receive less than the specified quota. This quota more often than not contained various substitutes, including even edible weeds such as were customarily fed to chickens. Frequently people had to eat soy beans instead of rice. Actually the number of calories consumed on the average was 10 per cent less than what the Germans ate during the worst period of the first World War under the British blockade. Even a man lying quietly in bed is supposed to require 1,200 calories a day to keep him alive. Malnutrition was general and infant mortality rose menacingly. As only soldiers were well fed and well clothed, they began to provoke public resentment. But even the soldiers had to be subjected to progressive cuts in rations, with the consequence that they were often seen bartering military supplies for food.

The rationing system and price control proved a complete failure and the black market thrived. For example, the official price for sugar was 2.2 yen a kan (3.75 kilograms) but in July, 1945, its black market price per kan was 530 yen.¹³ Sugar and soap became so rare that they were more precious than jewels and people kept them in the safe instead of bank notes which quickly depreciated. A runaway inflation threatened the nation as the currency circulation increased rapidly¹⁴ while consumer goods vanished from the market. In China prices were exorbitant but there were things to buy. In Japan there was nothing to purchase even if one possessed the means to buy. Altogether, the life of the people was reaching the limits of endurance.

13. USSBS, *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on Japan's War Economy*, p. 225, Table C-168. (Ed.)

14. Currency increased as follows:

	(In millions of yen)
April 1, 1941	4,700
December 31, 1941	5,979
August, 1945	9,038

Cohen, *Japan's Economy in War and Reconstruction*, p. 22. (Ed.)

VIII

Invitation to Surrender

I

THE POTSDAM conference began its sessions on July 17 after a delay caused, it was generally believed, by the retarded arrival of the Soviet delegation. It was difficult to gather reliable news about the conference on account of the security curtain which veiled it. The *London Daily Mail* angrily wrote that what they wanted to know was the conference agenda and not the menus at the delegates' meals. Soon, however, rumors began to crop up throughout the world, with increasing variety, regarding action at Potsdam on the possible fate of Japan. One report said that the Japanese government had made a secret offer of peace through the Soviet Union. Another said that Stalin had arrived in Potsdam with a plan for mediating between Japan and the Allied powers. A third rumor was that President Truman would surprise the conference by disclosing peace terms for Japan which had been agreed upon by the State, War, and Navy departments at Washington. It was generally agreed that some sort of joint statement regarding Japan would probably be issued. These speculations aroused grave concern on our part. Yet in view of the fact that China, one of the mainstays of the Allies in the Far East, was not participating in the conference, we could not easily give credence to them.

Reports from the United States were by far the most colorful. As we minutely examined numerous American broadcasts we discovered a growing demand for clarification of the meaning of unconditional surrender. At one time the press and radio concentrated much attention on this delicate question. We of course were aware that this was a sort of psychological warfare conducted by the agencies of the United States government against Japan. In fact, such warfare was begun by the Navy Department, we understood, as early as 1942, with a view to bringing about the cessation of

hostilities without invading our home islands. This campaign was intensified after the landing of the American forces in the Philippines in October, 1944. There is no doubt that the campaign provided the peace party in Japan with highly useful arguments for convincing vacillating minds that the sooner we abandoned futile resistance the better it would be for our nation.

Capt. E. M. Zacharias, USN, writes in his interesting book, *Secret Missions*, that he shaped Operations Plan 1-45 for subduing Japan by intensive propaganda and that it received the approval of Navy Secretary Forrestal and Admiral King on March 19, 1945.¹ The first broadcast that widely caught our attention was one made by this Captain Zacharias, on V-E day. It was addressed to "responsible and thinking Japanese," including Prince Takamatsu, the second brother of the Emperor, who was a powerful influence for peace behind the throne.

The campaign got into full swing about the middle of July. It was a masterpiece of the psychological offensive, tactfully planned and ingeniously executed. Customarily a "war of nerves" would aim at mobilizing for chaos in order to undermine the morale of the adversary. Yet in this case it was mobilizing for peace by subtly extending assistance to the minority party which was struggling in Japan for a cease fire. On July 13 Senator Capehart was reported to have stated that the Allies should now announce the precise minimum terms of peace to be imposed on Japan, since in his opinion the insistence on unconditional surrender was bound to prolong the war and multiply losses in men and material. In his view, if the retention of her present political structure could save Japan's face and facilitate her acceptance of the Allies' terms the United States should not hesitate to make this concession. It was also his view that rather than request the Soviet Union to participate in the war the United States had better seek a speedy termination of hostilities by agreeing to the preservation of the imperial house, as militarily Japan had already been clearly beaten.

This was followed by discussions in such popular periodicals as *Life* and *Time* magazines on the advantages of revising the formula of unconditional surrender. They stated that an attempt to exterminate the Japanese people, who glorify themselves by committing voluntary suicide, would involve the loss of another million

1. *Secret Missions* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), pp. 341-346. (Ed.)

Americans. They therefore proposed inducing the Japanese to cease resistance on the following conditions:

1. Disarm the Japanese forces at home and abroad.
2. Deprive Japan of all territories acquired since 1914 as well as Korea, Formosa, and the Bonin Islands.
3. Demilitarize Japan completely.
4. Punish war criminals and exact just reparations.
5. Occupy strategic points, including Tokyo, for a short period of time.
6. Recognize as the de jure government of Japan authorities who prove capable of executing the above terms.

Thus growing numbers of arguments in favor of relaxing or clarifying "unconditional surrender" began to pour in through our monitoring stations. After due analysis these reports were submitted daily to influential quarters, including, of course, the Emperor. Most of these arguments seemed to imply that a negotiated peace was desirable if by its means the United States could cut her losses in men and materials and ensure the disarmament and demilitarization of Japan. The fact that even such an influential organ as the *New York Times* (July 19, 1945) subscribed to this view was most encouraging.²

Of course there were others who strenuously opposed the revision of the established formula of unconditional surrender. Mr. Grew, former ambassador to Japan and acting secretary of state, said on July 10 that there were as yet no peace offers from the Japanese government and reiterated his firm conviction that the United States should not swerve from the declared policy of accepting only unconditional surrender from Japan upon the complete destruction of her military power. His statement was as follows:

We have received no peace offer from the Japanese Government, either through official or unofficial channels. Conversations relating to peace have been reported to the Department from various parts of

2. This statement by the author is doubtless based upon the editorial in the *New York Times* for July 19, 1945, excerpts from which were in all probability broadcast to Japan as part of the American program of psychological warfare. Only excerpts, taken out of context of the editorial as a whole, could justify the author's statement, however. The editorial is entitled "The Peace Rumors," and its entire tone is one of opposition to any negotiated peace and against the idea that the offer of such a peace could "shorten the Pacific war and make Japan harmless for the future." The peace rumors are branded as weapons of Japanese psychological warfare. (Ed.)

the world, but in no case has an approach been made to this Government, directly or indirectly, by a person who could establish his authority to speak for the Japanese Government, and in no case has an offer of surrender been made. In no case has this Government been presented with a statement purporting to define the basis upon which the Japanese Government would be prepared to conclude peace. . . .

The nature of the purported "peace feelers" must be clear to everyone. They are the usual moves in the conduct of psychological warfare by a defeated enemy. No thinking American, recalling Pearl Harbor, Wake, Manila, Japanese ruthless aggression elsewhere, will give them credence.

Japanese militarism must and will be crushed. The policy of this Government has been, is, and will continue to be unconditional surrender. Unconditional surrender does not mean, as the President pointed out in his message of June 1, 1945, the destruction or enslavement of the Japanese people. . . .³

Hanson Baldwin was more blunt when he said on July 20:

Japan has plainly reached a crisis and it is for her to make the choice: unconditional military surrender or unconditional annihilation. There cannot be, and there will not be, any compromise with our essential aim—destruction of Japanese militarism. There cannot be and there will not be "appeasement," though called by a sweeter name. Japan's guilt is as great as Germany's. It must be erased and expiated fully and completely.⁴

However, what interested us most deeply was the trend of expression in regard to the status of the Emperor. On July 21 the *Washington Post* carried an anonymous letter which, as we learned later, was supplied by the ingenious OWI. The final passage of this letter was as follows:

If, as Admiral Suzuki revealed in the Diet, their [the Japanese] chief concern is over Japan's future national structure (*kokutai*), including the Emperor's status after surrender, the way to find out is to ask. Contrary to a widespread belief, such a question can be answered quickly and satisfactorily to all those who are concerned over the future of the peace of the Orient and the world.⁵

On the same day Captain Zacharias spoke on the air, this time as "an official spokesman of the United States Government." Repeat-

3. *Department of State Bulletin* (July 15, 1945) XIII, 84-85. (Ed.)

4. *New York Times* (July 20, 1945), p. 4. (Ed.)

5. Zacharias, *op. cit.*, pp. 370-371. (Ed.)

ing President Truman's victory announcement made on V-E day that the United States did not seek the extermination of the Japanese nation, he said that the sole and best means of saving Japan was the acceptance of unconditional surrender. He further stated that "The Atlantic Charter and the Cairo Declaration are the sources of our policy" and concluded with a warning that "the Japanese leaders face two alternatives. One is the virtual destruction of Japan followed by a dictated peace. The other is unconditional surrender with its attendant benefits as laid down by the Atlantic Charter."⁶

This was the first time that any reference was made to the Atlantic Charter and for this reason the statement attracted much attention in Japan. For the Anglo-American declaration proclaimed "as common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future of the world" the following high purposes:

1. Their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other.
2. They desire to seek no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned.
3. They respect the rights of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.
4. They will endeavor, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all states, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity.
5. They desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing for all improved labor standards, economic advancement and social security.
6. After the final destruction of the nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.
7. Such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance.

6, *New York Times* (July 22, 1945), p. 4. (Ed.)

8. They believe that all nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments.⁷

The fact that Zacharias' broadcast was widely circulated within the United States was also quite interesting. Close on its heels, on July 22, Archibald MacLeish, assistant undersecretary of state, distinguished between the terms to be imposed on Japan and the treatment to be accorded her. He stated that the United States would never modify the terms, which were those of unconditional surrender, but that the treatment to be meted out after such a surrender was another thing. Quoting President Truman, MacLeish said, "The treatment we give the Japanese will depend to some extent on how long their resistance continues and how much fighting our boys have to do."

There were, indeed, many other broadcasts from the United States and Great Britain which, while ostensibly discussing the peace feelers allegedly emanating from the Japanese government, went far in enlightening our minds as to their conception of conditions for terminating the war.

2

The position had now become clear. The United States and Great Britain insisted upon the formula of unconditional surrender but intended to accord us in substance modified treatment. We in turn were prepared to accept unconditional surrender in substance but were anxious to obtain the formula, or appearance, of a negotiated peace. It was the task of our diplomacy to adjust the difference between these two standpoints which, after all, was largely psychological. But it was an extremely difficult task, quite impossible to execute speedily through the cumbersome exchange of coded telegrams between Tokyo and Moscow.

7. *Christian Century*, LXI, 405. (Ed.)

Naotake Sato⁸ was one of our veteran career diplomats, who enjoyed, it seemed, the confidence and good will of the Kremlin; but because of his extended absence from home he was not sufficiently versed in the confusing complexities of domestic politics. Although he was once foreign minister for a short period, Sato is far better known in Europe than at home. He served as an eminently successful ambassador at many European capitals, including Warsaw, Brussels, and Paris, but was best known at Geneva, where he took a leading part in the activities of the League of Nations. There is a small restaurant in Geneva called the Bavaria which was widely patronized by the foreign diplomats who went there to beguile their not too bright hours of forced sojourn by Lake Lemman. The walls of this restaurant are heavily decorated with caricatures of international celebrities, and among them there hangs a comic sketch of Sato. What is remarkable is the legend beneath. It says, "If Sato tells a lie the sun will rise in the west." This tribute to him reflects the universal recognition of his solid and steady character. A courageous man of high integrity, he had always acted according to the dictates of his conscience, and his conscience now told him there was no way left but to accept unconditional surrender and save the nation from eventual annihilation. He repeatedly advised the home government to that effect. Referring to these advices, Mr. Byrnes, then secretary of state, praises Sato as a "realist and a courageous representative."⁹ Logically the ambassador was quite correct and we did not differ from him at all. But the explosive character of our domestic situation was such that it was utterly impossible openly to propose unconditional surrender. Obviously that would have been suicidal. It would have destroyed completely the chances of ever obtaining a peace.

These circumstances made us realize more than ever the urgent necessity of dispatching Prince Konoye to Moscow for a talk with Stalin, in order to settle there at once the issue of peace or war. The conversations between Hirota and Malik were regarded from

8. Naotake Sato, ambassador to Moscow from August, 1943, to the end of the war, "favored friendly relations with Russia, was considered liberal and an internationalist, and was reported to have stated in 1942 that the war between Japan and the United States was a regrettable mistake, but 'we cannot stop now.'" USSBS, *Japan's Struggle to End the War*, p. 30. (Ed.)

9. J. F. Byrnes (Harper & Brothers, 1947), *Speaking Frankly*, p. 211.

the first as a prelude to the negotiations to be held, so we hoped, later at Moscow.

We were now awaiting with growing anxiety the reply from the Soviet government. On July 16 Rozovsky told Sato that his government could not make a reply in view of the fact that our proposal of a few days past (July 13) was vague and difficult to understand. Rozovsky asked what was to be the precise mission entrusted to Prince Konoye? Thereupon renewed instructions were telegraphed to Sato on July 21. These said that Konoye would be dispatched to Moscow in obedience to the wish of the Emperor in order to solicit the good offices of the Soviet government with a view to obtaining terms of peace other than unconditional surrender. Konoye, it was added, would come with definite proposals concerning the restoration of peace, which constituted the basis of our foreign policy both during and after the war. For reasons unknown to us this telegram was delayed in reaching Sato, who was only able to execute the instruction on July 25.

In the meantime the homeland fared as ill as the front line. There were air raids day and night, rain or shine. One after another flourishing cities were reduced to shambles overnight. On the windy night of May 26 some 500 superfortresses struck the government and palace districts of Tokyo.¹⁰ The scene was a gruesome one. Thousands perished in the sea of blazing flames while more suffered terrible injuries. I lived through the initial phase of the intense German Blitz on London, but the incendiary raids on Tokyo were far more cruel and damaging as our residential buildings of wood and paper were highly inflammable. One never knew when he would be rendered homeless. If we enjoyed a night's rest under our own roof we congratulated ourselves on our good luck, which was rare and slender in those days.

The poor defense put up by our Air Force was also very disheartening. The giant bombers flew low, indifferent to the bursting shells, their silver wings brightly silhouetted against the crimson sky. A staff officer of GHQ told me that on one of these all-night raids on the Tokyo area the anti-aircraft guns ran out of ammunition after firing some 10,000 rounds. At that time that was approximately one month's production of AA shells!

Soon the raids extended to the medium-sized towns all over the

10. *New York Times* (May 26, 27, 1945), pp. 1, 1. (Ed.)

country, with the result that by the end of the war 81 out of 206 towns had been destroyed. Of the six largest cities in Japan 49 per cent of the homes in Tokyo, Kawasaki, and Yokohama were destroyed. In Osaka and Kobe 32.6 per cent were destroyed, and in Nagoya 31 per cent.¹¹ Only Kyoto escaped with less than 1 per cent destruction. All in all 2,502,000 houses were demolished by air attack while 614,000 more were torn down to clear firebreaks. Thus about 22,000,000 persons were routed from their homes in urban areas.¹²

Incidentally, in the May raid several buildings in the imperial compound were destroyed. Tsuneo Matsudaira, minister of the imperial household and former ambassador to Washington and London, was forced out of office. He had to take the responsibility for this misfortune. He was victimized thus by the Army on account of his reputation as an Anglophile in spite of the Emperor's statement that he felt better since the palace bombing as he could now share the people's hardships. To us who were struggling to crystallize the peace movement the dismissal of Matsudaira was a severe blow.

In the latter part of July air raids waxed fast and furious. Every day land-based aircraft and carrier planes rained bombs and machine-gun bullets everywhere, in both urban and rural districts. In July alone enemy operations over Japan involved 8,000 carrier planes and 12,000 land-based aircraft.¹³ There was no safe place in the whole archipelago. The enemy even began to announce beforehand a list of towns to be attacked, warning the residents to evacuate in time. This was known as "advance notice bombing." B-29's dropped leaflets day after day in the summer of 1945. About six by eight inches in size and printed in blue, these leaflets showed on the front a vivid picture of B-29's dropping a shower of incendiaries. They contained usually the names of some dozen cities which were listed as probable victims of the impending raid. On the back of the leaflets appeared warnings in Japanese captioned "Appeal to the People" which advised the noncombatant population to evacuate for safety. This was a very clever piece of

11. USSBS, *The Effects of Air Attack on Japanese Urban Economy*, p. 7, Table 6. (Ed.)

12. Cohen, *Japan's Economy in War and Reconstruction*, p. 407. (Ed.)

13. The numbers for April and May according to Imperial General Headquarters were 12,200 and 11,000 respectively.

psychological warfare, as people in the affected regions got extremely nervous and lost what faith they still had in the Army's ability to defend the mainland. Although the attacks were thus widely advertised, not a single plane engaged the enemy air units.

3

July 26, 1945, will long remain a memorable day in the history of Japan, for it was on this summer day of sweltering heat in Tokyo that the Potsdam proclamation was issued under the signatures of Truman, Churchill, and Chiang Kai-shek. The name of Stalin, who was commonly regarded as the central figure of the conference, was conspicuously absent. That was only correct, as the Soviet Union was still a neutral in the Pacific war. Speculation was naturally widespread in Japan regarding the true intentions of the Soviet dictator. What had he done with our *démarche* of July 13 requesting his good offices for peace? The Soviet government kept scrupulously silent. It taxed our patience to the utmost. Some found comfort in the fact that the Soviet Union at least refrained from an open breach of the neutrality pact by avoiding participation in the Potsdam proclamation. But clearly it was too naïve to assume that Stalin was entirely innocent or ignorant of the affair. Certainly it was more sensible to conclude that the astute dictator was simply biding his time. However, a drowning man clutches even at the proverbial straw. We refused to be disheartened, and riveted our attention on Moscow, hoping against hope.

In the narrative of Mr. Byrnes, the secretary of state accompanying President Truman to the Potsdam conference, there is a passage that bears upon the attitude of Stalin. He writes:

At a later meeting Stalin told the President and me that the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow had asked whether the Soviet Union would agree to act as a mediator to bring about the settlement of the war. This request, Stalin said, did not indicate a willingness to surrender unconditionally as the Allies demanded; it was phrased so generally that Mr. Molotov simply told the Ambassador that he would discuss the matter with him later. Subsequently, Stalin said, the Japanese Ambassador presented another message. This stated that the Emperor wished to send Prince Konoye to Moscow with a message saying that Japan wanted to end the war but had decided to fight on with all its strength

as long as unconditional surrender was demanded. Stalin added that a letter was then sent to the Ambassador stating that the character of the indicated message was general, contained no specific proposal, and therefore, it was impossible to give a definite reply. President Truman expressed his approval of Stalin's action.¹⁴

The signature of Chiang to the proclamation, which was obtained by telegram caused us some surprise, since the generalissimo seemed to us to be fully occupied in restoring his shattered front in remote China.

Stating first that Japan was to be given an opportunity to end the war, the proclamation then went on:

The prodigious land, sea and air forces of the United States, the British Empire and of China, many times reinforced by their armies and air fleets from the west, are poised to strike the final blows upon Japan. This military power is sustained and inspired by the determination of all the Allied Nations to prosecute the war against Japan until she ceases to resist.

The result of the futile and senseless German resistance to the might of the aroused free peoples of the world stands forth in awful clarity as an example to the people of Japan. The might that now converges on Japan is immeasurably greater than that which, when applied to the resisting Nazis, necessarily laid waste to the lands, the industry and the method of life of the whole German people. The full application of our military power, backed by our resolve, will mean the inevitable and complete destruction of the Japanese armed forces and just as inevitably the utter devastation of the Japanese homeland.

The time has come for Japan to decide whether she will continue to be controlled by those self-willed militaristic advisers whose unintelligent calculations have brought the Empire of Japan to the threshold of annihilation, or whether she will follow the path of reason.

Following are our terms. We will not deviate from them. There are no alternatives. We shall brook no delay.

There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world.

Until such a new order is established and until there is convincing

14. *Op. cit.*, p. 205.

proof that Japan's war-making power is destroyed, points in Japanese territory to be designated by the Allies shall be occupied to secure the achievement of the basic objectives we are here setting forth.

The terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out and Japanese sovereignty shall be limited to the islands of Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku, and such minor islands as we determine.

The Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives.

We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who have visited cruelties upon our prisoners. The Japanese Government shall remove all obstacles to the revival and strengthening of democratic tendencies among the Japanese people. Freedom of speech, of religion, and of thought, as well as respect for the fundamental human rights shall be established.

Japan shall be permitted to maintain such industries as will sustain her economy and permit the exaction of just reparations in kind, but not those which would enable her to rearm for war. To this end, access to, as distinguished from control of, raw materials shall be permitted. Eventual Japanese participation in world trade relations shall be permitted.

The occupying forces of the Allies shall be withdrawn from Japan as soon as these objectives have been accomplished and there has been established, in accordance with the freely expressed will of the Japanese people, a peacefully inclined and responsible government.

We call upon the Government of Japan to proclaim now the unconditional surrender of all the Japanese armed forces, and to provide proper and adequate assurances of their good faith in such action. The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction.¹⁵

It seems that as soon as the proclamation was released for publication, a copy was sent by special messenger to Molotov, who telephoned Byrnes, asking him to hold it two or three days. When Byrnes replied that the proclamation had already been released Molotov seemed disturbed, taking the position that he should have been consulted.

Instead of demanding unconditional surrender from our government the last item significantly called upon it to proclaim the unconditional surrender of all our armed forces. This was a deft move, as it spared the imposition of indignities upon His Majesty's

15. *U. S. Department of State Bulletin* (July 29, 1945), XIII, 137. (Ed.)

government and merely called for the unconditional surrender of the fighting forces. The Army at first opposed the publication of the proclamation but was finally prevailed upon by the Foreign Office to agree to it. However, owing to the representations of the Army certain portions were suppressed before publication. This included the statements that the Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, "shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity to lead peaceful and productive lives" and the assurances that "We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation." Also, the newspapers were encouraged to denounce the proclamation as a device to intimidate our people into submission.

The popular reaction, however, was that the terms were far more lenient than had been generally expected. The people were exhausted by war and tired of the militarists' rule; despairing of the future, they began to murmur approval. If the acceptance of this proclamation could save our homeland from utter devastation and, while releasing the nation from the iron grip of the military, at once restore peace and tranquillity, was it not a reasonable price to pay? In fact, with the publication of the proclamation the last ounce of energy was sapped from the people at large. It was as if the possibility of peace suddenly emerged into sight. I remember that quite a few people came to see the foreign minister in order to urge upon him the necessity of immediately accepting the offer.

Incidentally, on receiving the text of the proclamation and Togo's lengthy explanation of it, the Emperor said without hesitation that he deemed it acceptable in principle.

The proclamation, however, was a unilateral announcement of a policy on the part of the three powers. It was not formally addressed to our government. We received it only through our radio monitoring service. Moreover we did not know what the position of the Soviet Union was regarding it. In fact we were then eagerly awaiting their reply to our proposal of peace. Therefore, after mature deliberation the hastily convened cabinet decided to keep silence for a while about the Potsdam proclamation pending further developments. This decision was duly reported to and approved by the Emperor. All the same the fighting services, particularly the Navy High Command, tenaciously opposed this decision on the ground that it would undermine the morale of the rank and file,

and urged the government to issue a trenchant statement challenging the proclamation.

By this time the military and their sympathizers were getting suspicious of the frequent meetings of the six members of the Supreme War Council and they began to organize an active opposition to the peace party. The aged prime minister seems to have been influenced by the growing opposition, for, apparently in a moment of weakness, he told the press that it was the policy of the government to ignore the proclamation entirely. This was a piece of foolhardiness. When I heard of this I strongly remonstrated with the cabinet chief secretary, but it was too late. The press, eager for a sensation, printed the prime minister's statement with a banner headline, and Tokyo radio flashed it—to America! The punishment came swiftly. An atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6 by the Allies who were led by Suzuki's outrageous statement into the belief that our government had refused to accept the Potsdam proclamation.

"In the face of this rejection," says Henry L. Stimson, who at the time was secretary of war, "we could only proceed to demonstrate that the ultimatum had meant exactly what it said when it stated that if the Japanese continued the war 'the full application of our military power, backed by our resolve, will mean the inevitable and complete destruction of the Japanese armed forces and just as inevitably the utter devastation of the Japanese homeland.' For such a purpose the atomic bomb was an eminently suitable weapon."¹⁶

Had Suzuki been more steadfast or his advisers less stupid we might have been spared the atomic attack.

On the same plea, that we were disregarding the proclamation, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan on August 8. True, the cabinet decided to "ignore" the proclamation, but to ignore it should have meant simply that we refrained from commenting on it. To state expressly that we would ignore the proclamation was entirely contrary to the purpose of the decision. Such was the penalty of having an inexperienced man at the head of the government.

16. *On Active Service in Peace and War* (Harper & Brothers, 1947), p. 625.

4

When the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6 we could not make out at first what it actually was. The next day the San Francisco broadcast carried an announcement by President Truman that it was the atomic bomb. We were staggered. If a single bomb was equal in destructive power to the mass raid of a fleet of two thousand B-29's, with this lethal weapon the Allies could exterminate all life in Japan in less than a week! Further continuation of the war was mass suicide. Togo immediately went to the palace. The Emperor, showing deep concern over the fate of the helpless victims, said that since it was obviously impossible to defend the homeland any longer we had better conclude peace immediately without wasting time arguing about terms. That was common sense. But the Army, as ever, was a stranger to common sense. We tried to convince the thoughtless officers, saying that the appearance of the atomic bomb had revolutionized warfare. In spite of their avowed determination it was impossible with our inferior weapons to ward off the atomic attack. We even tried to save their face by advancing the plausible argument that it was not their fault if they laid down their arms; it was necessitated by the deplorable backwardness of our scientific research, which lagged far behind that of the United States and Great Britain.

However, the Army would not listen to reason. They were, as ever, riding on a hot steed headlong to self-destruction. They still defied the deepest powers of Hell. They even went to the length of forbidding the press to mention the atomic bomb lest it affect the people's morale. On August 7 GHQ issued the following communiqué:

1. In the attack made by a small number of B-29's on August 6 considerable damage was caused to Hiroshima city.
2. In this attack the enemy used a new type of bomb. Details are now under investigation.

The new type bombs that were used by the superforts that raided Hiroshima on Monday morning were dropped by parachute and exploded before reaching the ground. A considerable number of houses in the city collapsed. The explosive power of the bomb is now under investigation, but it is considered that it should not be made light of.

So for some time the press referred to the atomic bomb as merely "a new type of bomb"—while all the world was agog at the new terror. But the nation could not for long be left in ignorance, as the enemy radio widely disseminated the news. There were only three buildings left in all Hiroshima, a city which had never been bombed before. There was mile on mile of destruction and débris, range on range of collapsed city blocks where every building had been buffeted down and burned. The dead rotted away by the thousands, while mortally injured people, young as well as old, were left unattended to their fate amid the ruins.¹⁷ "Naked trees and canted telephone poles; the few standing, gutted buildings only accentuating the horizontality of everything else . . . ; and in the streets a macabre traffic—hundreds of crumpled bicycles, shells of street cars and automobiles, all halted in mid-motion."¹⁸ Such, indeed, was the ghastly aspect of the once prosperous city. This was more than the "considerable damage" reported in the GHQ communiqué.

The authorities tried in vain to drown out the powerful enemy broadcasts from adjacent bases such as Manila and Okinawa. These broadcasts in excellent Japanese exercised a great influence on the minds of the people. When it became no longer possible to suppress the truth, the Army attempted to minimize the destructive power of the bomb. They mobilized the scientists who proved willing tools for hoodwinking the nation. Then the government hastily drew up a note of protest to the United States and forwarded it through the Swiss government which represented our interests.

We had, indeed, too many of these unscientific scientists who did not scruple to render a mercenary service to the military. Misguided patriots as they were, they were dupes of their own deception, and the gullible nation, soothed into false security, had to pay for it later by a bitter disillusionment.

Those irresponsible men who molded public opinion so as to preserve military domination are the ones who are responsible for our present national misery. Both scientists and publicists were in fact powerful instruments in inflaming popular hatred against

17. Official figures announced six months later listed total casualties at 306,545 (78,150 dead, 9,284 seriously injured, 13,983 missing) but this estimate is generally believed to be too low. There were 80,000 soldiers stationed there and at least half of them perished in the raid.

18. John Hersey, *Hiroshima* (Penguin Books, 1946), p. 91.

the democratic countries and in regimenting the people into blindly supporting the war of aggrandizement. Our people were fed upon an organized propaganda designed to uphold the prestige of the chosen nation. This made them embark recklessly upon a course of wild conquest. In pursuing such a course the hard were hardened and the blind made blinder so that they might stumble on and fall deeper into the abyss of shame.

Even without the atomic bomb the United States, by continuous incendiary raids operated by her growing armada of B-29's, could easily have destroyed all our cities and towns of more than thirty thousand inhabitants by the end of September. Now, with the sudden appearance of the new weapon, it was only too apparent that the counterassault on the home front, upon which our Army relied as the last chance, was utterly impossible.

Perhaps for a while the effect of the atomic bomb could be minimized by propaganda. But the massed invasion of Manchuria by the Red Army was impossible to hide from the people. The glacial avalanche from the north stunned GHQ. They knew that the game was up. Even for our generals the combination of the atomic bomb and the Russians proved too strong.

5

The atomic bomb had completely revolutionized war. Of course, even before the appearance of the atomic weapon war had long since become a sordid affair. Gone is the romantic style of heroic times, with the wild charge of the gallant cavalry. Gone is the laureled glory of victorious nations, the rich spoils of war.

Modern war has brought only crushing disillusionment. But atomic war means the obliteration of mankind, instantaneous and inescapable. The choice is whether there should be a warless or a manless world. "Unless we can catch up politically to the point we have reached in science," says Anthony Eden, "we are all going to be blown to smithereens."¹⁹

We did not possess any information about the progress of the American "Manhattan project" for developing the atomic weapon. We did not know that on June 1, 1945, the American authorities adopted recommendations to the effect that the bomb should be

19. *New York Times* (November 22, 1945), p. 1. (Ed.)

used against Japan as soon as possible, without prior warning as to its nature. These recommendations were based upon the fact that there was no visible indication of any weakening in our determination to fight rather than accept unconditional surrender. As we still possessed a great military force estimated at five million men, it was thought advisable to administer a tremendous shock which would carry convincing proof of the Allies' power to destroy the Japanese Empire. It was feared that otherwise we might determine to resist to the end in all the areas under our control.

The final offensives against Japan had already been planned. Operation Olympic, as it was called, envisaged an invasion of the southern island of Kyushu on November 1, 1945. The island of Honshu was not to be invaded until early in the spring of 1946. These grand designs required the deployment of a vast force of at least five million. The assault by the Sixth Army on Kyushu was to have taken the form of a trident attack converging on the southern part of the island from three directions. The final invasion of Honshu, in Operation Coronet, would have been made on the Kwanto district, the plain in which lay the city of Tokyo.

All told, operations would have involved a spectacular naval force of 3,053 vessels. In fact, the United States had by this time concentrated more than 90 per cent of her warships and 42 per cent of her combat planes in the Pacific theater. This eloquently demonstrates the magnitude of the task of invading Japan.

Allied casualties would have reached frightful dimensions if a landing had been attempted on our mainland. In Europe the casualties in the first three weeks after the Normandy landing were about 60,000, as contrasted with a monthly average of about 27,000 for the entire war.²⁰

We now know that Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson on July 2 submitted to President Truman an important memorandum, generally agreed upon with Acting Secretary of State Grew and Secretary of the Navy Forrestal.²¹ It said that if the Allies invaded one of our main islands in actual occupation it would most probably have "cast the die of a last ditch resistance" on our part. The Allies would then have to go through with a fight to a finish even more bitter than that with Germany, incurring a frightful loss of

20. D. D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, p. 270; *World Almanac*, 1950, p. 738.

21. Stimson, *op. cit.*, pp. 619-623.

life. For an attempt to exterminate our people by gunfire or other means, it observed, would only "tend to produce a fusion of race solidarity and antipathy which has no analogy in the case of Germany." Japan therefore should be given a warning of what was to come, accompanied by a definite opportunity to capitulate. Such a warning must be tendered before the actual invasion started.

It seems that the Stimson memorandum provided ideas which were later incorporated in the Potsdam proclamation. Stimson even suggested the inclusion in the proposed warning of the assurance that the Allies did not exclude the possibility of a constitutional monarchy for Japan under the present dynasty. The Potsdam ultimatum of July 21 omitted, however, all reference to the status of the Emperor.

Meanwhile on July 16, during the progress of the Potsdam conference, a successful atomic test was made in New Mexico. The result was reported at Potsdam to the president and secretary of war, who authorized General Spaatz to make use of the bomb at any time after August 3. From the list of five suggested targets Kyoto, our ancient capital and a shrine of art and culture, was fortunately removed. Hiroshima received the first bomb on August 6, followed by Nagasaki three days later. Incidentally, according to Byrnes, after the meeting of the Big Three on the afternoon of July 24 President Truman told Generalissimo Stalin that after long experiment the United States had developed a new bomb far more destructive than any other known bomb and would use it very soon unless Japan surrendered. Stalin replied that he was glad to hear of the bomb and hoped it would be used. He showed strangely little curiosity about the nature of the bomb.²² It was two days after this conversation that the Potsdam declaration was issued.

After the war we heard that these two bombs were the only ones then in the possession of the United States. But at that time the psychological impact of the bomb was so profound that the entire urban population became panic stricken lest a third attack follow on the heels of the second. In no time wild rumors started that a certain city was marked as the next victim, causing an exodus from the area in question.

At 8:15 A.M. August 6, 1945, the world entered the atomic age.

22. Byrnes, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

The test of the atomic bombs in the waters of Bikini lagoon held in the summer of 1946 was fitly called Operation Crossroads. Humanity now stands at the crossroads of life or death.

At 8:15 A.M. August 6, 1946, the siren wailed once more in Hiroshima. In the débris of the bomb-blasted city some 180,000 persons gathered together to offer a silent prayer for their dead. For whom did the siren wail if not for mankind?

At 8:15 A.M. August 6, 1947, the bell of peace was rung at the very spot over which the bomb was exploded. The residents of the city pledged their earnest efforts for the cause of peace. For whom did the bell toll if not for the world?

On that day General MacArthur sent the following message to the city:

Two years ago the shadow of mounting violence overhung the earth, and men and races and continents desperately struggled to resolve the issues of war.

Then over Hiroshima was launched a yet mightier weapon, and warfare assumed a new meaning in deadliness and destruction and in its challenge to the reason and the logic and the purpose of man. For the agonies of that fateful day serve as warning to all men of all races that the harnessing of nature's forces in furtherance of war's destructiveness will progress until the means are at hand to exterminate the human race and destroy the material structure of the modern world.

This is the lesson of Hiroshima. God grant that it be not ignored.²³

One of the first questions asked me by the American war correspondents who swarmed into Tokyo with the vanguard of the occupation forces in September, 1945, was, "Was it the atomic bomb or Russian participation in the war, that was responsible for the surrender?" That is a difficult question to answer. It will probably always remain a debatable point. But to us who knew the inner development it seems that neither of the two basically changed the course of the war. It is certain that we would have surrendered in due time even without the terrific chastisement of the bomb or the terrible shock of the Russian attack. However, it cannot also be denied that both the bombs and the Russians facilitated our surrender. Without them the Army might still have tried to prolong resistance.

23. *New York Times* (August 6, 1947), p. 13. (Ed.)

One of these journalists visited Hiroshima. When I asked his impression he said that "ninety-nine per cent of the visitors were agreed that the bomb should have never been used." That, too, is a point for future historians to debate.

"The Most Unkindest Cut"

I

ON JULY 25, before the issuance of the Potsdam proclamation, Foreign Minister Togo sent an urgent telegram to Sato instructing him immediately to establish personal contact with Molotov. It was understood that the Big Three meeting would be suspended because of Churchill's absence. The British delegation wanted to return home in time for the July 26 announcement of the results of the general election held several weeks earlier. In this election, contrary to general expectation, the Conservative party was heavily defeated. The Labor party was returned to power with a majority of 148 over all other parties and groups combined. The Conservatives lost 181 seats. Since the Soviet delegation remained in Berlin, Sato was instructed to try to meet Molotov at an appropriate place to be designated by him, such as Warsaw. He was directed to repeat our request of July 13 to Molotov, adding that in asking the Soviet government to mediate for peace it was our desire to offer Stalin a unique opportunity of playing a historic role as peacemaker. This, he said, would greatly enhance Stalin's personal prestige both at home and abroad.

At this point, however, we were wondering whether it was not high time to make a parallel approach to Great Britain. We said so in the telegram to Sato, suggesting that in case the Kremlin remained indifferent we might be obliged to explore other channels.

Togo and I had by this time finished drafting the imperial message to be entrusted to Konoye for delivery to the Russians. There was some doubt as to whether the message should be addressed to President Kalinin or to Prime Minister Stalin. Etiquette required that it be addressed to the former but expediency suggested the latter. If it became necessary to cultivate a new channel, a similar message had to be drafted addressed to other recipients. And who

should these be? As our concern was primarily with preserving the rule of the imperial house, we thought it appropriate to choose the king of Sweden as the intermediary.

We still retained the memory of Himmler's approach to the royal house of Sweden in suing for peace on the eve of the dramatic collapse of the Nazi government toward the end of April. It was Prince Bernadotte, the King's nephew, who then acted as his intermediary. We also knew that both Great Britain and the United States maintained imposing staffs at Stockholm. The United States was reinforcing its various legations in the Scandinavian countries with State Department experts on Japan.

Moreover, when Mr. Baggö, Swedish minister to Tokyo, had returned home in the spring of 1944, some vague hints as to the future possibility of requesting the good offices of the Swedish government in connection with the question of peace had been conveyed to him. I had advised Foreign Minister Shigemitsu to hold a confidential talk with Baggö and give him a veiled intimation that we might have to solicit the assistance of his government in the not too distant future. Such a conversation was extremely difficult and dangerous, for in those days even the foreign minister's contacts with foreign envoys were apt to invite the suspicions of the vigilant military police. There was added danger in the fact that these envoys' telegrams were being decoded by our authorities, including the Army. Being deeply convinced, however, of the futility of continuing the war, Shigemitsu readily acted upon my advice.

The conversation with Baggö took place toward the end of March. The Swedish minister was quite responsive. He went home with the understanding that he would try to influence the Swedish government to discover the conditions on which the United States would be willing to conclude peace with Japan. Unfortunately, however, a cabinet change occurred in Japan before Baggö's arrival home. In May Baggö called upon Okamoto, our able minister at Stockholm, but on account of the change in our government Okamoto had not been sufficiently prepared.

In Tokyo the matter was turned over to Togo, Shigemitsu's successor. Togo pursued it with much interest, but before the conversations matured he had embarked upon negotiations with Moscow.

Mention must also be made of Bunshiro Suzuki, one of the influential directors of the newspaper *Asahi* and a staunch liberal, who, separately from us, urged Baggë to exert himself on behalf of peace.¹

We learned later from a reliable source that at one of the court functions held in Stockholm in the previous December King Gustav V had questioned our military attaché on the trend of the Pacific war. He said that he felt a lively concern for the preservation of the monarchy in Japan. His question implied the advisability of seeking the termination of hostilities before it was too late. It was easily understandable that the king should be interested in the preservation of our monarchy, for it requires only a casual acquaintance with history to realize that defeat works havoc with crowned heads and sceptered hands. War is ever the gravedigger of dynasties and defeat their undertaker. King since 1907, Gustav V, now over ninety years old, has occupied the throne longer than any other monarch in the world and his immense prestige has made it possible for him to treat his ministers like schoolboys. The Swedish prime minister, Gunther, amplified the sovereign's remark, explaining that it amounted to a veiled invitation to request the king's intervention on behalf of peace.

Unfortunately, however, the military attaché failed to report this highly important conversation to Tokyo, and we remained ignorant of the king's inquiry until after the war.

This attaché, who had once been an eager and enthusiastic supporter of the Axis alliance, now began to engage in irresponsible peace maneuvers without even the authorization of the War Office. It was the Swedish Foreign Office that warned our minister that such unauthorized maneuvers, of which the minister was completely unaware, were highly detrimental to the prospects of peace. Such was the mentality of our erratic soldiery that they showed no scruple in disregarding the Foreign Office. Little aware of their own incompetence, they freely interfered with the conduct of our foreign policy. In this case the military attaché was severely reprimanded by the war minister, but the damage had already been done.

1. For his conversations with Baggë, see his *Miscellanies, Still and Active*, pp. 65-71. This collection of occasional writings was published in the summer of 1947. Unavailable to ed.

Mention must be made at this juncture of the Dulles route, as we then called it, which at one time attracted our serious attention. This time it was our naval attaché at Berne who, through a neutral channel, tried to establish a contact with a certain Mr. Dulles. We were told that the latter was communicating directly with Acting Secretary of State Grew.² However, the circumstances were not sufficiently clear and we could not identify the Mr. Dulles in question. Consequently, for fear that the Americans were trying to conduct a peace offensive with a view to creating embarrassments in Tokyo, we decided to withhold encouragement from our legation in Switzerland. Thus the so-called Dulles route was not exploited.

2

Meanwhile in Moscow Sato saw Rozovsky once again on July 30, 1945. Sato said that Japan found it difficult to accept the demand in the Potsdam proclamation for unconditional surrender. But the Japanese government, he stated, was prepared to terminate hostilities in a spirit of compromise and on terms which avoided the formula of unconditional surrender and ensured the honorable existence of our country. He repeated again, per instructions, the request for Russia's good offices. By this conversation we wanted to sound out the relation of the Soviet government to the proclamation, besides making it clear that we still expected the USSR to mediate on our behalf.

The Soviet government failed to make any response. Sato was instructed again on August 2 to remind them of the extreme urgency of the situation. We warned Sato that we could not afford to lose a single day if we were to end the war before the assault on our mainland. We also authorized him to negotiate with the Soviet government on the basis of the Potsdam terms. The Potsdam conference broke up shortly after midnight on August 2, and a final statement was issued which, however, did not include

2. It was said that if a truce was arranged before the end of June 1) the national structure of Japan would be preserved intact, 2) Japan would be allowed to retain a much reduced fleet of merchantmen, and 3) Mr. Dulles would use his influence for the retention by Japan of Formosa. This was accompanied by an offer to put an American plane at our disposal if the Japanese government dispatched to Berne an officer of the rank of general.

any reference to the Far East. What was published dealt exclusively with the treatment of Germany, and struck us as surprisingly harsh. It was, it looked to us, none other than a Carthaginian peace. This played into the hands of the military party, who warned the people of the horrible fate of a subjugated nation. However, the terms for Germany contrasted with the terms for Japan, which were also announced from Potsdam, and made the latter appear quite moderate and therefore acceptable.

Stalin returned to Moscow on August 6, 1945, but the first news reaching us about him was that he had received T. V. Soong, the Chinese premier. It was reported that Soong conversed with Stalin for two hours before midnight on August 7. That was ominous enough. When I heard this piece of news I at once concluded that all was now over. I said as much to Togo who regretfully agreed with me. If there had been any shreds of good will yet left on the part of the Soviet government toward us, why would both Molotov and Stalin avoid our ambassador and give audience to Soong?

When Sato again requested an interview with Molotov he received an appointment for 5 P.M. on August 8. At this meeting, without allowing Sato to state his case, Molotov abruptly notified him that the Soviet Union would be at war with Japan as from the following day.

Sato records in his book, *The Two Russias*, the circumstances of his last interview with Molotov:

I had notified the Soviet government of my desire to see Mr. Molotov as soon as he returned to Moscow. As I heard through the radio on the night of August 6 that the Soviet delegation had returned home by train from Berlin, I at once renewed my request to see the foreign commissar. On the 7th Molotov sent me a telephone message that he was available at 8 P.M. next day. Later this was advanced to 5 P.M. Accordingly I went to the Kremlin at the specified hour. I did not observe anything unusual when I entered the palace gate or as I was ushered into Molotov's study. Speaking in Russian, I congratulated the foreign commissar on his safe return, but Molotov interrupted me saying, "I have today a communication to make in the name of the Soviet government." He then invited me to take a seat and, himself sitting, read aloud a notification which was none other than the declaration of war. I had been prepared for the worst for some time past, so I did

not lose my tranquillity of mind. Since, however, our government had humbly solicited the good offices of the Soviet government in restoring peace, I thought it might not be altogether impossible for the Soviet Union to come forward and accept the noble role of mediator. Therefore I cannot deny that I was considerably shocked when I received this sudden notification. Feeling that what was to come had come at last, I maintained a calm attitude.³

Prior to the arrival of this notification at Tokyo, however, the Red Army had gone into action, invading Manchuria in the early dawn of August 9. Our Manchuria garrison, a weak remnant of what once had been a proud and mighty army, fell back without offering much resistance.

Although the Soviet action was quite unexpected at this moment, it was by no means entirely unforeseen. The Soviet press had been growing hostile to us, openly predicting our early collapse. A book entitled *Port Arthur* extolled the gallant defense of the Russian garrison besieged there in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 and laid claim to this strategic port. According to Soviet reports it was enjoying a big sale. Moreover, from about February on, powerful forces with offensive equipment were being transferred to Siberia at the rate of some thirty carloads a day. According to our intelligence reports, at the end of May the total reached 160,000 men, 1,300 airplanes, 1,200 tanks, and 870 guns of various caliber. The fact that these forces were not equipped for a winter campaign was an ominous warning that they were likely to go into action before the severe Manchurian winter should set in.

The news of the Soviet declaration of war reached the Foreign Office from the Domei News Agency at about 4 A.M. August 9. It was immediately relayed to the Emperor and the prime minister.

We had counted on the good will of the Soviet government. We had relied on their good offices to terminate the war. Were we not even then expecting their reply to our recent proposal? "This was the most unkindest cut of all." We had asked for an olive branch and received a dagger thrust.

Perhaps, however, the Soviet action was to a certain extent justifiable. It was true that a powerful section of our Army harbored hostile intensions against the northern neighbor. It must be

3. N. Sato, *The Two Russias*, p. 207. Unavailable to ed.

recalled that when the Soviet Union was in peril Japan's attitude was none too reassuring for her. When Japan was in danger, therefore, it was natural that the Soviet Union should return the compliment in kind. The leaders at the Kremlin are reputedly super-realists, guided solely by the realities of the situation. It was therefore logical for them to join forces with their Allies in administering a finishing blow to Japan when she was visibly collapsing. After all, except for the brief halcyon days that followed the conclusion of the neutrality pact in the spring of 1941, the relations of the two countries were generally unstable. It was most unfortunate that when both were trying to improve their relations there should have occurred a war between Germany and the Soviet Union.

I was informed after the declaration that Prime Minister Suzuki rejected the resignation en masse which was suggested by some who were in his confidence. Followed by Togo, he hastened to the palace. When he emerged from the audience the prime minister told his private secretary that he was now determined to see things through and bring about an early cessation of hostilities. It was evident that his remarks reflected the Emperor's desire.

In the morning of August 8 Soviet Ambassador Malik called upon Togo and handed him the following declaration of war:

After the defeat and surrender of Hitlerite Germany, Japan became the only great power that still stood for the continuation of the war.

The demand of the three powers, the United States, Great Britain and China, on July 26 for the unconditional surrender of the Japanese armed forces was rejected by Japan, and thus the proposal of the Japanese Government to the Soviet Union on mediation in the war in the Far East loses all basis.

Taking into consideration the refusal of Japan to capitulate, the Allies submitted to the Soviet Government a proposal to join the war against Japanese aggression and thus shorten the duration of the war, reduce the number of victims and facilitate the speedy restoration of universal peace.

Loyal to its Allied duty, the Soviet Government accepted the proposal of the Allies and has joined in the declaration of the Allied Powers of July 26.

The Soviet Government considers that this policy is the only means able to bring peace nearer, free the people from further sacrifice and

suffering and give the Japanese people the possibility of avoiding those dangers and destruction suffered by Germany after her refusal to capitulate unconditionally.

In view of the above, the Soviet Government declares that from tomorrow, that is August 9, the Soviet Government will consider itself to be at war with Japan.⁴

Togo expressed his regret at the Soviet's action and reminded the ambassador that since June the Japanese government had been trying its best to improve relations with his country. Togo said it was beyond his comprehension that the Soviet Union should have suddenly declared war upon Japan without making any reply to our request for good offices made in July and without any reference to the neutrality pact which was in force until 1946.

We did not know that Soviet participation in the Pacific war had been agreed upon at Yalta. Neither did we know the price Great Britain and the United States paid for it. The Yalta conference was held in February, 1945, and at that time Germany, as evidenced by the Rundstedt offensive of December, 1944, although badly beaten, was still capable of counterattacks. As for Japan, it was commonly estimated that the Pacific war would require at least eighteen months after V-E day. That being the situation, it was perhaps understandable that Great Britain and the United States should have offered the Soviet Union attractive concessions to lure it into the war against Japan. After all, these concessions did not cost them anything. They merely involved the transfer of Japanese territory, such as the southern half of Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands, and of our vested interests in Manchuria. According to Hopkins, Stalin said that "the Russian people had clearly understood that they must fight the Germans to defend the very existence of their homeland, but that they could see no such threat from the Japanese. However, if the required political conditions were met, then it would not be difficult for him to explain to the Supreme Soviet and the people just what was their stake in the Far Eastern war."⁵ This sounds rather imperialistic and out of harmony with the ideals pursued at the same conference. The Yalta secret protocol of February 11, 1945, later released for publication, contains the following:

4. *New York Times* (August 9, 1945), p. 3. (Ed.)

5. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, p. 867.

The leaders of the three Great Powers—the Soviet Union, the United States of America and Great Britain—have agreed that in two or three months after Germany has surrendered and the war in Europe has terminated the Soviet Union shall enter into the war against Japan on the side of the Allies on condition that:

1. The status quo in Outer-Mongolia (The Mongolian People's Republic) shall be preserved;

2. The former rights of Russia violated by the treacherous attack of Japan in 1904 shall be restored, viz:

- (a) the southern part of Sakhalin as well as all the islands adjacent to it shall be returned to the Soviet Union,

- (b) the commercial port of Dairen shall be internationalized, the preeminent interests of the Soviet Union in this port being safeguarded and the lease of Port Arthur as a naval base of the USSR restored,

- (c) the Chinese-Eastern Railroad and the South-Manchurian Railroad which provides an outlet to Dairen shall be jointly operated by the establishment of a joint Soviet-Chinese company it being understood that the preeminent interests of the Soviet Union shall be safeguarded and that China shall retain full sovereignty in Manchuria;

3. The Kurile islands shall be handed over to the Soviet Union. It is understood, that the agreement concerning Outer-Mongolia and the ports and railroads referred to above will require concurrence of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. The President will take measures in order to obtain this concurrence on advice from Marshal Stalin.

The heads of the three Great Powers have agreed that these claims of the Soviet Union shall be unquestionably fulfilled after Japan has been defeated.

For its part the Soviet Union expresses its readiness to conclude with the National Government of China a pact of friendship and alliance between the USSR and China in order to render assistance to China with its armed forces for the purpose of liberating China from the Japanese yoke.⁶

This seemed a small cost to pay for Russia's help against Japan. But was it? In the light of subsequent world developments can it be said that these concessions did not represent any substantial cost to Great Britain and the United States? If they had known at the time of Yalta that Japan would succumb so soon, would they willingly have paid such a price for Soviet entry into the war? It

6. U. S. Department of State—Executive Agreement Series, No. 498, *Crimea Conference* (U. S. Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 3. (Ed.)

is perhaps unfair to criticize past actions, but Byrnes for instance states frankly that he "would have been satisfied had the Russians determined not to enter the war."⁷

It was also felt by some that the Soviet Union hastened to join the war because of the atomic bomb, which suddenly brought the end of hostilities in sight. Gen. John R. Deane comments in *The Strange Alliance* that although the Soviet press did not pay much attention to the atomic bomb the leaders in the Kremlin must have given serious thought to it, and that they knew they had to buy admission tickets for the Pacific peace conference in great haste or all the seats would be taken.⁸ There is some irony in the fact that, as intimated at Moscow in September, 1944, Soviet participation in the Pacific war took place exactly three months after German surrender. In fact, Stalin is said to have taken much pride in this coincidence.

President Truman hastily convened a special press conference at the White House. He said he could not delay the announcement in view of its importance, and laconically proclaimed, "Russia has just declared war on Japan. That is all."⁹ A spokesman of the British Foreign office said he did not know that it was coming. Clearly it was a surprise to the governments of the Allied powers, which had not been informed of it until the last moment. This seems, in turn, to imply that the decision of the Soviet government was made suddenly.

3

There is an interesting aspect of the extension of American influence over the Far East. By 1890 the frontier of the West had disappeared and the United States had embarked upon a new phase of expansion in Asia. It was by the urge of her destiny,¹⁰ manifest or otherwise, that the course of empire continued to move westward. In those days China, weakened by internal revolts and harassed by foreign wars, offered an easy prey for the com-

7. J. F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, p. 208. (Ed.)

8. Viking Press, 1947, pp. 275-276. (Ed.)

9. *New York Times* (August 9, 1945), p. 1.

10. *Time*, December 29, 1941 (p. 16), contains a story datelined Manila according to which General MacArthur stated: "When George Dewey sailed into Manila Bay on May 1, 1898 it was Manifest Destiny working itself out. By God, it was Destiny that brought me here! It was Destiny."

peting European powers that were bent upon carving colonial empires out of her for themselves. Soon China seemed about to be devoured by these powers, leaf by leaf like an artichoke. Russia, however, through geographical propinquity, enjoyed clear advantages over the other powers. With the completion of the Trans-Siberian Railway in 1895 Russia was in a position to defy the naval supremacy of England, which had traditionally been the ultimate arbiter in conflicts arising out of the colonial disputes of the powers. Russia concentrated her efforts on attaining hegemony on the Asiatic continent, but only to meet a disastrous defeat at the hands of Japan. Behind the latter were aligned England and the United States. Germany and France supported Russia in a combination known as the East Asiatic Dreibund, whose avowed aim was to challenge British supremacy in the Far East. In fact the war between Japan and Russia was none other than a contest between sea power and land power. The perennial truth of the predominance of the former was thus once again proved.

After the defeat of Russia Japan stepped into her shoes and through a rapid expansion into the mainland became a dominant power in Asia. The Manchurian adventure created for her a pre-occupation with continental expansion. By degrees she established a firm position on the continent. In the process she alienated herself from the sea-power group. On the other hand, although Japan replaced Russia on the continent, unlike Russia her power continued to depend upon control of the adjacent seas. That explains why it was that although a number of land engagements took place on the continent the Pacific war was mainly decided by naval battles.

Japan has now been reduced to military impotence while China is still in chaos and confusion. As a result a vast power vacuum has been created. This offers a golden opportunity for Soviet Russia to establish a predominant position in the Far East. But the extension of Russian influence over the largest part of Asia will jeopardize the interests of the United States in these parts of the world. And that puts the United States squarely face to face with the Soviet Union.

It must be remembered that when Russia originally transferred her attention from Europe to Asia comparative quiet reigned in Europe. History shows for instance that during the ten years from

1895 to 1905 Europe enjoyed a measure of tranquillity because during this decade Russia concentrated her attention on Far Eastern issues. However during the succeeding decade, as Russia turned back again to Europe, having been defeated in Asia by Japan, Europe underwent one crisis after another, culminating in the war of 1914.

The pendulum of Russian action deserves attention in so far as it possesses a direct bearing upon the issues of peace and war in Asia and Europe. For is it not said that there is little difference between the external policies of imperial Russia under the tsar and those of the Soviet Union under Stalin? As Masaryk once said, "They still wear the tsarist uniform, albeit inside out." If so, what will take place when the Soviet Union resumes an active policy in the Far East? Will the everlasting conflict of sea power and land power again be resumed? In the fertile plain of Manchuria which from time immemorial has been the battlefield of contending forces, Soviet influence has now replaced that of Japan. Soviet troops are occupying the northern and strategically most important half of Korea. As the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union are unfortunately deteriorating, we cannot help entertaining grave anxiety regarding the future of the Far East. Should the ideal of "one world" be doomed to remain an idle dream, and should there develop "two worlds" antagonistic one to another, what would be the fate of the Asiatic nations, Japan included?

The capitulation of Japan, it seems, may not necessarily be the end of a book but merely the beginning of a new chapter.

The Great Argument

I

ON AUGUST 9, 1945, the six members of the Supreme War Council met from 10 A.M. until 1 P.M. All of them recognized the impossibility of continuing the war and so none objected to the foreign minister's proposal to accept the Potsdam proclamation "in principle." There developed, however, an acute difference of opinion regarding the conditions upon which it was to be accepted. All agreed on one point, namely, the preservation of the imperial house. Should the Allies refuse that, we had no choice but to fight on to the bitter end. But War Minister Anami, and Umezu and Toyoda, the two chiefs of staff, insisted on adding three other conditions. They were:

1. No occupation of the homeland by the Allies.
2. Voluntary withdrawal of Japanese expeditionary forces and disarmament and demobilization of our armed forces by Japan herself.
3. Voluntary punishment of war criminals, by the Japanese government.

Everyone spoke quietly but gravely. There was no display of eloquence and the deliberation continued in an extremely gloomy atmosphere. It was during the course of this conference that the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

After two o'clock on the same afternoon an emergency cabinet meeting was convened. Following an explanation of the general situation by the foreign minister, the service ministers were called upon to state their views on the prospects of the war. Yonai, the navy minister, frankly admitted that there was no chance whatsoever of victory. Anami countered this by saying that the Army was still confident of dealing a decisive blow to the invaders when the homeland became the battlefield. He said that although he could not predict a certain victory he thought it premature to

despair. There was some probability of an unexpected turn of events, so long as we maintained all-out efforts in the struggle. Yonai, a taciturn admiral, was always sparing of words but he stressed his view that on both spiritual and material grounds continuation of the war was impossible. Anami refused to admit defeat and even declared that the chances were still even. He said that it was impossible to disarm the expeditionary forces and that there was nothing to do but fight on.

Other ministers in turn explained the economic situation of the country. They were the ministers respectively of munitions, treasury, agriculture, transportation, and the home minister. Their reports were all grave and gloomy. Ishiguro, minister of agriculture, warned that the harvest would be the worst since 1931. Kohiyama, minister of transportation, was doubtful how long the sea lanes to Korea and Manchuria could be kept open. In his view communications even with Kyushu were in danger. In short, it was the consensus of opinion that the war was no longer possible. Only the home minister, Abe, known for his sympathy for the Army, gave warning that he could not guarantee peace and order if the termination of hostilities were sought diplomatically. He had been in charge of the secret police at the time of the February 26 incident and therefore, he said, he knew what to expect from the Army at a time like this.

Thereupon Togo explained at length what had taken place in the morning. He stressed the imperative necessity of accepting the Potsdam proclamation without further delay, with only the indispensable condition: the preservation of our national structure, which was the *sine qua non* of peace. Now the negotiations with the Kremlin had been conducted in utmost secrecy and were kept confidential even from the cabinet. Therefore the circumstances attending them were now revealed to the ministers for the first time. This was necessary as the Soviet declaration of war included references to our request for mediation. Naturally the general public were even more in the dark about the matter than the ministers. This added, it seems, to their psychological confusion when ultimately the war was abruptly terminated by our surrender.

When Prime Minister Suzuki invited the rest of the cabinet to state their opinion, two or three ministers besides Anami, Umezu,

and Toyoda declared themselves to be in favor of attaching the three additional conditions. One of them said he would abide by the prime minister's decision. Another was severely reprimanded by Suzuki for saying he had no opinion to state. Evidently a section of the cabinet was inclined to be hostile to Togo and there was an audible murmur of criticism of his "defeatism."

Chiefs of staff are not entitled to attend cabinet meetings. Thus, with three or four ministers differing from the rest of the fifteen cabinet members, the cabinet was divided against itself. Consequently no decision was in sight and much precious time was being wasted. After several hours' heated argument the cabinet dispersed without reaching any decision. There now remained the last recourse, to ask the Emperor to pronounce his final verdict on the conflicting views.

Shortly before midnight on August 9 the Supreme War Council met in the presence of the Emperor. This was a full dress meeting (imperial conference) including, besides the six component members, the directors of the General Affairs Bureaus of the Army and Navy, the chief secretary to the cabinet, and the director of the Combined Planning Board.¹ Baron Hiranuma, president of the Privy Council, was also invited. As they entered the air raid shelter in the imperial palace where the meeting took place all the participants received a copy of the Potsdam proclamation together with the two proposals: a) making the retention of the Emperor the sole condition of our acceptance, and b) including the three other conditions. It was stiflingly hot in the narrow shelter which measured only thirty by eighteen feet. The elderly prime minister presided.

First to speak was Togo, who stated forcefully that there was no alternative but to accept the proclamation with the sole reservation concerning the status of the Emperor. He dismissed the idea of attaching any other reservations, pointing out that it was tantamount to refusing the Allies' offer and that they would regard such a move on our part as a challenge. Anami vigorously opposed the foreign minister, repeating his fond theory that we were not yet defeated and could still administer a fatal blow to the enemy when the latter attempted the invasion of our homeland. This would create an opportune moment for concluding peace on

1. An institution which replaced the Planning Board.

advantageous terms. He reluctantly stated, however, that he would not object to terminating hostilities immediately if all the four conditions were accepted by the Allied powers. Yonai quietly supported the foreign minister. Hiranuma asked questions right and left and after consuming more than thirty minutes finally declared himself in favor of Togo's stand. Before the conference every effort had been made to impress Baron Hiranuma with the utter impossibility of continuing the war.

Thereupon the chiefs of staff brought their big guns into action and energetically supported Anami, urging that by prosecuting hostilities we could yet hope to repair the situation. Thus the council was divided three against three, with Suzuki keeping silence. Togo, Yonai, Hiranuma were on one side, and Anami, Toyoda, and Umezu on the other. The argument was endless and again time wore on without decision. Finally, at 2 o'clock Suzuki rose and said quietly: "Gentlemen, we have spent hours in deliberation without coming to a decision and yet agreement is not in sight. You are fully aware that we cannot afford to waste even a minute at this juncture. I propose, therefore, to seek the imperial guidance and substitute it for the decision of this conference."² With this announcement the aged prime minister advanced to the throne.

This announcement, sudden as it was, electrified the whole gathering and all the participants gasped, not having anticipated such a step. It was most unusual to convene an imperial conference without arranging beforehand both the agenda and the final decision. Generally speaking, in the past only perfunctory debates were required to approve decisions prepared beforehand, and without exception prepared by the military. The imperial conference was held merely to maintain the fiction that the Emperor sanctioned such a decision in person. As a matter of fact the Emperor was always a dummy who sat through the sessions silently without ever taking an active part. Thus, to solicit the advice of the Emperor was an extraordinary deviation from time-honored practice. Apparently most of the participants, the soldiers in particular, had expected that the conference would disperse without reaching any

2. See the paraphrase of this statement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Sakomizu in USSBS, *Japan's Struggle to End the War*, p. 8. There are some slight discrepancies in the timing of events, as between this source and the author's account given here. (Ed.)

decision. Thunderstruck, they forgot even to remonstrate with the prime minister.

The Emperor, who with the utmost anxiety was listening attentively to the arguments, slowly opened his mouth and said with visible emotion that he concurred in the views presented by the foreign minister. Amplifying his decision, he said that in view of the critical situation at home and abroad further continuation of hostilities would surely bring about the utter destruction of our nation, besides inflicting unnecessary miseries upon mankind in general. He pointed out that past assurances by the fighting services had too often proved misleading, there having been great discrepancies between their plans and the promised results. How could one rely on their assurances now? Therefore, although he fully understood the depth of the feeling on the part of all the participants, he felt compelled to call a halt to the war and accept the Allies' terms, bearing what was indeed very hard to bear.³

This was none other than a reprimand for the impudence exhibited on the part of the military. The Emperor had shown his deep concern over the people afflicted by the war. It was as if his bleeding heart went out in sympathy to each of the suffering millions. He also said that he little minded what would happen to his person or to the reigning house provided peace could be restored for the benefit of posterity. He called to mind the leadership so masterfully demonstrated by his grandfather, the Emperor Meiji, at the time of the intervention by the three great powers, Russia, France, and Germany, which deprived the nation of the fruits of our victory over China in 1895. It was by Emperor Meiji's command that we accepted the "advice" of the three powers and concluded peace on modified terms.

When the Emperor, speaking somewhat falteringly, concluded his speech, Suzuki followed it with the statement that the imperial decision had been expressed and that this should be the conclusion of the conference.

The imperial verdict was announced and the issue was now clear. It was to be peace! The nation whose fate had hung by a hair was saved by the explicit command of the Emperor to terminate hostilities at once.

3. See Sakomizu's paraphrase, *ibid.*, pp. 8-9. (Ed.)

2

Marquis Koichi Kido, lord privy seal, was the most active person behind the scenes. He was the one who assisted the Emperor to announce this timely decision. Matsudaira, his secretary, and I worked as a confidential liaison between the throne and the government. When the Supreme War Council and the cabinet were deadlocked by divided opinions, it was upon Kido that we impressed the necessity of settling the differences at the imperial conference. For we knew we could rely upon the Emperor's guidance, which was, in this country, absolutely final.⁴ On that memorable day, August 9, Kido was received in audience as much as six times. According to his diary these were:

from 9:55 to 10:00 A.M.

from 10:55 to 11:45 A.M.

from 3:10 to 3:25 P.M.

from 4:35 to 5:10 P.M.

from 10:50 to 10:53 P.M.

from 11:25 to 11:37 P.M.

And on August 10 he was in audience with the Emperor from 2:33 to 2:38 P.M.

Incidentally, these entries clearly show Kido's characteristic preciseness. It takes more than usual attention to detail for a man at the focus of such activity to make minute records of events, not omitting even an audience of only three minutes' duration. The last entry shows that Kido was summoned by the Emperor immediately after the imperial conference. He describes how the Emperor, with tears in his eyes, explained to him what had just happened.

Of all our diplomats Kido trusted Shigemitsu most. His relations with Togo were merely friendly, but with Shigemitsu he was particularly cordial. Shigemitsu's endeavors for the cause of peace have been told in Chapter III.

While the great argument was still undecided, I took the liberty of telephoning for Shigemitsu, who then lived at Nikko, some five hours' journey from Tokyo. Shigemitsu arrived by car. I urged him to go at once to the palace and argue with Kido that it

4. But see p. 234 above for a differing interpretation by the author of the Emperor's role as arbiter. (Ed.)

was the height of folly to attach conditions for the acceptance of the Potsdam proclamation. This would surely cause a breach of negotiations with the Allies. Shigemitsu called upon Kido twice, on August 8 and 9, and obtained assurances that the lord privy seal would follow his advice. At about the same time Prince Takamatsu, the Emperor's second brother, sent a similar message to Kido. Both Prince Takamatsu and Shigemitsu were recognized leaders of the peace party. In fact they were among the few who had laid the foundations for peace.

3

There was bright moonlight on the evening of the great decision. It was so clear that I could count each pine needle on the ground. These majestic pines from time immemorial have repeated every spring their green legend. Strange spectators of history, what a lurid pageant they have witnessed, this moon and these trees!

Four years before, on the eve of the war, another imperial conference had taken place at this palace. It met in the afternoon and lasted for many hours. As I sat in the Foreign Office waiting for its outcome, I prayed and prayed that peace might yet be saved. I still recall vividly the profound disappointment I then felt on hearing of the decision for war. On this decision our fate would rest, and now we know the result. Where are the prancing horses and tossing plumes of the triumphant generals that once adorned these noble gardens? Where are the blaring trumpets and marching standards of the victorious troops on parade? Poor petitioners for mercy, we were now about to decide on capitulation.

Oddly enough, there was no air raid on this fateful evening. Did the Americans know that a dramatic conference was in session within the palace? Quietly shining in the moonlight, the palace was silhouetted against the sky where, undisturbed, dim constellations moved on in majestic silence, propelled, I thought, by

the prophetic soul

Of the wide world dreaming on things to come.

In preparation for the imperial conference I had traveled back and forth several times between the palace and the prime minister's residence. Now there was no more to do but wait, but with what

anxiety did I wait! The die was once again to be cast, this time for peace.

While I sat in a room adjoining the council chamber I was besieged by a mass attack of mosquitoes, not B-29's. The mosquitoes and the heat finally drove me into the car parked outside.

The imperial conference broke up after 2 A.M. Deathly pale from fatigue, Togo came out and joined me in the car which went at full speed to the cabinet meeting summoned for immediately after the conference. The cabinet, without debate, formally endorsed the decision of the imperial conference. It may be added here, however, that Abe showed considerable reluctance to put his signature to the decision.

I hurried on to the Foreign Office where, under the masked lights, several senior officials were anxiously waiting for me. In a few words I told them, to their intense relief, what had happened at the palace. I then hastily drafted the following note in English which was dispatched at once to our legations in Berne and Stockholm. The message to Berne would be transmitted through the Swiss government to the governments of the United States and China. The one to Stockholm would be sent through the Swedish government for the governments of Great Britain and the Soviet Union. This is the note:

In obedience to the gracious command of His Majesty the Emperor who, ever anxious to enhance the cause of world peace, desires earnestly to bring about a speedy termination of hostilities with a view to saving mankind from the calamities to be imposed upon them by further continuation of the war, the Japanese Government several weeks ago asked the Soviet Government, with which neutral relations then prevailed, to render good offices in restoring peace vis à vis the enemy Powers. Unfortunately, these efforts in the interest of peace having failed, the Japanese Government in conformity with the august wish of His Majesty to restore the general peace and desiring to put an end to the untold sufferings entailed by war as quickly as possible, have decided upon the following.

The Japanese Government are ready to accept the terms enumerated in the joint declaration which was issued at Potsdam on July 26th, 1945, by the heads of the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, and China, and later subscribed by the Soviet Government, with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any

demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a Sovereign Ruler.

The Japanese Government sincerely hope that this understanding is warranted and desire keenly that an explicit indication to that effect will be speedily forthcoming.⁵

I received word from the code clerk that these telegrams had been dispatched by 7 A.M. As regards the Soviet Union, however, we took double insurance. Togo sent for Ambassador Malik the next morning and handed him the same note. In order to avoid publicity this interview took place in the guest room of the House of Peers, by arrangement of the chief secretary, Kobayashi.

What a night it was! A night of endless anguish and anxiety, it completely exhausted me. Also it seemed that the fatigue of previous sleepless nights now began to tell heavily upon me. I still recall the deserted streets of Tokyo onto which I sauntered in the early morning on my way home to snatch a few hours' sleep. As I got on a passing tramcar, the shrill air-raid sirens started their banshee howling, as Churchill used to call it. I saw the few passengers look up startled. They appeared frightened, shifting uneasily on their seats. After all, they did not know that just a short while before their government had sued for peace.

5. *U. S. Department of State Bulletin*, XIII, 205.

Into the Light

I

IT WAS NOW our turn to wait for the Allies' reply. I lived what was literally a life of torture. The clock ticking out each second seemed to be spelling out the suspended doom of the empire now about to crumble.

In the meantime two meetings were held, on August 10 and 11. The first was the gathering of jushin at the prime minister's official residence. Togo explained to them at length the circumstances that led to the acceptance of the Potsdam proclamation. Tojo was at first opposed, but finally changed his opposition, saying that if that was the august wish of the sovereign it could not be helped. More strange was Koiso's remark to the effect that since our armaments were based on the Divine Will we could not possibly preserve our national polity without them. The government, however, had convened this meeting not to consult the jushin as to what to do but to inform them of what had already been done. There was thus little need to heed their remarks.

The second meeting consisted of members of the imperial house who were hurriedly summoned to Prince Takamatsu's. Togo was again called upon to offer detailed explanations, until those present were satisfied. Prior to this meeting some officers of the Army General Staff who demanded the prosecution of the war tried to prevail upon Prince Mikasa, the youngest brother of the Emperor, to intervene for them. The Emperor has three younger brothers. Of these Prince Chichibu, the first brother, and Prince Mikasa, the third, were officers in the Army, while Prince Takamatsu was a naval officer. As Prince Chichibu was ill and lived a quiet life away from Tokyo, these army officers thought fit to enlist the influence of Prince Mikasa; they were gravely disappointed when the prince refused to help them.

The American reply to our proposals reached us about 4 A.M.

August 12, through the San Francisco broadcast. It must be mentioned here that as soon as our acceptance of the Potsdam terms had been cabled we took measures to broadcast the text through the Domei News Agency. The first broadcast was made at 8 A.M. on the 10th. This step was taken on the initiative of the Foreign Office without consulting the military, who were greatly incensed. Heavy pressure was brought to bear upon the officials concerned, including Saburo Ota, one of my close associates. The formal American reply arrived in Tokyo early on the morning of August 13 from Secretary of State James Byrnes through the Swiss government. It read:

With regard to the Japanese Government's message accepting the terms of the Potsdam Proclamation but containing the statement, "with the understanding that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a sovereign ruler," our position is as follows:

From the moment of surrender the authority of the Emperor and the said Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms.

The Emperor will be required to authorize and ensure the signature by the Government of Japan and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters of the surrender terms necessary to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration, and shall issue his commands to all the Japanese military, naval and air authorities and to all the forces under their control wherever located to cease active operations and to surrender their arms, and to issue such other orders as the Supreme Commander may require to give effect to the surrender terms.

Immediately upon the surrender the Japanese Government shall transport prisoners of war and civilian internees to places of safety, as directed, where they can quickly be placed aboard Allied transports.

The ultimate form of government of Japan shall, in accordance with the Potsdam Declaration, be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people.

The armed forces of the Allied Powers will remain in Japan until the purposes set forth in the Potsdam Declaration are achieved.¹

It seems that our acceptance of the Potsdam proclamation reached Washington in the early hours of August 10. Byrnes rushed immediately to the White House and conferred with the secre-

1. *U. S. Department of State Bulletin*, XIII, 206. (Ed.)

taries of war and navy. Admiral Leahy urged prompt acceptance of the Japanese message, but Byrnes wanted a little time to think. He did not see, he told the president, why he should retreat from the demand for unconditional surrender which had been presented before the atomic attack and the Soviet declaration of war upon Japan. If any conditions were to be accepted, he wanted the United States and not Japan to state them. The president agreed with him and Byrnes drafted the reply.²

Calling it a "masterful paper," Stimson states that the reply "avoided any direct acceptance of the Japanese condition, but accomplished the desired purpose of reassuring the Japanese."³ Stimson also says that

this Japanese reservation precipitated a final discussion in Washington. For months there had been disagreement at high levels over the proper policy toward the Emperor. Some maintained that the Emperor must go, along with all the other trappings of Japanese militarism. Others urged that the war could be ended much more cheaply by openly revising the formula of "unconditional surrender" to assure the Japanese that there was no intention of removing the Emperor if it should be the desire of the Japanese people that he remain as a constitutional monarch. This latter view had been urged with particular force and skill by Joseph C. Grew, the Under Secretary of State, a man with profound insight into the Japanese character. For their pains Grew and those who agreed with him were roundly abused as appeasers.⁴

As soon as the San Francisco broadcast was received it was reported to the Emperor through Kido. That same morning Togo sought an audience at which the Emperor told him that he deemed the Allies' reply satisfactory and that it should be accepted without further delay. He also instructed Togo to repeat his wishes to Prime Minister Suzuki. Togo called upon Suzuki and found him closeted with Baron Hiranuma. The latter was raising serious objections to the Allies' reply on the ground that its acceptance would jeopardize our national structure. It was as if a sudden mountain of iceberg had appeared out of the fog while a ship was sailing unaware of such lurking danger. Once in the ice field, however, the ice was here, there, all around, threatening the ship with immediate destruction.

2. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, p. 209.

3. Stimson, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, p. 627.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 626.

Many joined Hiranuma and made violent protest against accepting the reply. Hiranuma's objections were based on paragraphs two and five of the reply. Paragraph two included the statement that "the authority of the Emperor and the said Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate the surrender terms." The phrase "shall be subject to" was objected to by Hiranuma, a mint of legal opinions, who took much pride in his erudition regarding constitutional theories. He held that it compromised the Emperor's sovereign prerogatives.

It must be recalled here that my draft acceptance of the Potsdam terms originally mentioned only "the constitutional status of the Emperor." But at the imperial conference, on Hiranuma's insistence, it was altered to "the prerogatives of His Majesty as a sovereign ruler." When I was told of this alternative I felt extremely fearful lest it invite unnecessary complications. I also experienced a moment's hesitation in choosing the word "prerogatives" when I put Hiranuma's Japanese version into English. *Taiken*, the word he used, literally translated meant powers inherent in the crown.

Hiranuma has for years been active as a leader of the reactionary school. At this point he amply demonstrated his characteristic concern regarding the national structure, the defense of which was his self-imposed mission. Perhaps he was trying in this way to cover his fundamental retreat, for by agreeing to the surrender he was in fact deserting his followers, who for the most part were avidly nationalistic. In short, he was risking his reputation as the avowed defender of the cause of the crown.

Paragraph five contained the stipulation that the ultimate form of the government of Japan should be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people. This was plain common sense to us, yet the cynical Hiranuma read between the lines a sinister encouragement to subversive activities calculated to overthrow monarchical government.

Hiranuma eloquently asserted his convictions and the docile Suzuki, plain sailor as he was, seems to have been considerably influenced by these contentions. Suzuki feared that the acceptance of the Allies' reply might pave the way to an eventual undermining

of our monarchical system. He suggested that enforced disarmament by the enemy was unacceptable as it jeopardized the soldiers' honor; therefore there was nothing for it but to fight on. Togo curtly remarked that if the prime minister persisted in such an unreasonable attitude he, Togo, would have to make a personal appeal to the throne. A personal appeal of a minister dissenting from the prime minister means a division of views within the cabinet. According to our constitutional practice this would cause the immediate fall of the cabinet.

Togo also called upon Kido to report on what seemed to be Suzuki's vacillation. Kido thereupon remonstrated with the prime minister, declaring that he deemed it imperative to end hostilities at once, even if it should provoke an armed uprising on the part of the malcontents. Suzuki at last seemed sufficiently impressed.

Meanwhile, however, the two chiefs of staff made a joint appeal to the throne, independently of the cabinet, urging the Emperor not to accept the American reply. Alarmed and angered, Yonai sent for the naval chief of staff and severely reprimanded him for this extraordinary action. Yonai, as naval minister, should have been consulted beforehand. The situation again became extremely grave.

2

At the cabinet meeting held the afternoon of August 12 Togo explained the purport of the reply received over the San Francisco radio, and discussions took place to determine whether it was acceptable or not. Anami as usual energetically opposed its acceptance. In this attitude he was, as before, supported by two or three other cabinet ministers. One said that the national structure of Japan was ordained by Divine Will and that "the freely expressed will of the people" could not possibly alter it. Another stated that disarmament was incompatible with the soldiers' honor and that we therefore had to continue the struggle. To me it was highly surprising that there should be any civilian ministers who rendered active support to the war party. These ministers were accomplices in chicanery, if not sharers of insanity! Togo reminded them that we could not now reject the reply unless we were to fight to the bitter end. This would be plainly in contradiction of the Emperor's

explicit command. The meeting adjourned to wait for the arrival of the formal reply from the American government.

The next day, August 13, the Supreme War Council met in the air-raid shelter of the prime minister's residence to discuss the formal reply which had arrived in the meantime. The council as before was divided three against three. Prime Minister Suzuki, Navy Minister Yonai, and Foreign Minister Togo were for unconditional acceptance. War Minister Anami, Army Chief of Staff Umezu, and Navy Chief of Staff Toyoda were against it. The latter three said that they could yet fight in case of necessity. Full of defiance, they appeared to hold in scorn the enemy's mighty power. But they were far from being animated merely by sheer courage. Neither were they fired by crude madness. They were not men necessarily impervious to reason. As professional officers of the fighting services they knew that the continuation of hostilities was not only futile but suicidal. Actually, they were hostages to the fiery younger officers who were still hopeful of ultimate victory and vehemently demanded war to the finish, and who were further incensed now by the possibility of a negotiated surrender.

At the War Office and the Army General Staff scores of young officers, captains, majors and lieutenant colonels, were meeting frequently in emergency conferences to devise plans to carry on the war. We were informed by our friends in the Army that their plan included among other measures the following:

1. Soliciting the Emperor to proclaim a full prosecution of the war at all costs.
2. Getting the war minister to order the whole Army to fight to the last man.
3. Proclaiming martial law throughout the land, with the war minister taking over the home ministry.
4. Cooperating actively with the "war party" in the Navy.
5. Ruthlessly suppressing the "peace party."

It was said that they decided to use hand grenades rather than machine guns to punish the peace party and maintain order if the people became agitated. They seemingly tried to establish contact with their many sympathizers, especially at the Naval General Staff—but the discipline enforced in the Navy by Yonai was such that this plan did not mature. Consequently, at interviews

with Anami they strongly demanded that he stand firm. These officers actually tried to obstruct the wireless communication of the Foreign Office with the governments of the neutral powers, Switzerland and Sweden.

The younger officers were acting like a pack of wounded wild boars. Does not Shakespeare say, "to fly a boar before the boar pursues, were to incense the boar to follow us"?⁵ Anami, Toyoda, and Umezu were surrounded by the infuriated young officers and feared to fly from them. Moreover their vanity did not allow them to accept defeat so long as the bulk of the younger officers were clamoring for the prosecution of hostilities. Besides, they could not bear the loss of face involved in what they feared would be an abject surrender. They therefore demanded modification of paragraphs two and three of the American reply, which they regarded as unacceptable. In fact, they even proposed additional conditions, namely, no Allied occupation and voluntary disarmament of our forces. This was no other than an attempt to wreck the peace parley by reviving their old contentions. We fought this opposition strenuously and rejected their renewed request for additional conditions. We made it clear that to do so would be to violate the decision of the imperial conference which had been formally sanctioned and irrevocably settled by the Emperor.

At 2 P.M. August 13 Togo went to report to the throne on the Allies' formal reply and also on the discussions of the Supreme War Council. The Emperor approved the foreign minister's stand and requested him to do his best to settle the issue.

The full cabinet met from 4 P.M. until 7 P.M. The prime minister invited the cabinet ministers to express their views, and one by one they did so, the majority favoring the acceptance of the Allies' reply. The chief question was whether to accept the reply as it was or ask for clarification of its paragraphs two and five.

Togo warned that further delay would only increase the suspicions of the Allies, now growing every hour, and destroy the chance of peace. With the forcefulness of his lucid and logical mind he urged prompt acceptance of the Allies' proposition without further ado. Anami opposed it strenuously, saying that if we accepted it we could not possibly ensure the preservation of our national structure. He further demanded modification of the

5. *Richard III*, III. 2. 28. (Ed.)

Allies' terms regarding the disarming of our troops and the occupation of our homeland. He maintained that we still possessed power to strike and that this should enable the foreign minister to use diplomacy. Home Minister Abe supported the war minister, saying that it was doubtful if our national structure could be safeguarded once our country was put under military occupation. He vigorously asserted that there was no way left but to fight on. Minister of Justice Matsuzaka said that the idea that the people could freely decide the ultimate form of government was incompatible with the concept of our unique national polity. These two clearly expressed their opposition to the foreign minister. There were others who were evidently not quite satisfied with the Allies' reply but acquiesced in what they thought was inevitable. One minister said that he would abide by the prime minister's decision. The count, therefore, was twelve to three. Although the cabinet was thus overwhelmingly in favor of acceptance it was divided against itself. So the meeting dispersed without any conclusion.

As the cabinet had failed to produce a decision, we wanted to convene another imperial conference at once. To this the Supreme Command, in particular the Navy, was opposed and we were obliged to lose a precious evening at this critical moment. At no time was our patience more severely taxed than on this occasion. Our worries were minutes, each minute ticking away the golden opportunity.

That evening, August 13, Togo was closeted from 7 until 9 P.M. with the two chiefs of staff. There was a sharp exchange of views. Although outnumbered Togo refused to give ground. While they were engaged in the difficult conversations, Admiral Onishi, vice chief of staff for the Navy, abruptly came in and passionately pleaded for postponement of the decision regarding the Allies' reply. Onishi came straight from Prince Takamatsu to whom he had made a similar, but vain, appeal. Tears rolling down his cheeks, he said that if we recruited twenty million men for the Special Attack Corps (the suicide corps) the war could be concluded in victory. Such, indeed, was the temper of the misguided men in the fighting services.

Admiral Onishi was the chief protagonist of the so-called Special Attack Corps. It was generally said that 8 bombers and 16 fighters

were required to sink a battleship or a carrier. In the case of suicide planes from 1 to 3 sufficed. Therefore in the latter period of the war many a young man volunteered to join the suicide corps. In the Navy alone 665 officers and 1,400 men died in suicide attacks. They took the spears with them but left the shields behind! They were the flower of patriotism. But in the end the useless slaughter began to receive much criticism. Onishi committed suicide after the termination of the war.

From about this time there developed an atmosphere of marked restlessness among the army officers. There was a secret plot on foot to organize a coup d'état, seizing the person of the Emperor by force and imprisoning the cabinet ministers as a preliminary to declaring for all-out war. We warned the navy minister to take precautionary measures in time. There was a precedent for the Navy to send marines to stand by for such emergencies: the famous February 26 incident when on a snowy morning some two thousand troops mutinied and occupied the prime minister's residence, the War Office, and metropolitan police headquarters in the heart of Tokyo.⁶

As tension mounted confusion developed. During August 11, 12, and 13 near chaos prevailed. The Emperor was summoning in quick succession the jushin, members of the imperial house, and the marshals of the Army and admirals of the fleet. He was trying his best to facilitate the surrender.

Some ministers thought it appropriate to release the news of the situation to the nation at large. But as there was no knowing what would then happen among our expeditionary forces, estimated at three million, this idea was abandoned. As a compromise a brief announcement was issued by the president of the Cabinet Board of Information, Shimomura, to the effect that the preservation of our national structure was the last line to be defended. This implied that if the monarchical system were secured we were ready to lay down our arms. This was printed with a banner headline in the metropolitan dailies on August 11 and the same story was repeated for days in succession.

We had not been consulted on Shimomura's statement prior to its publication. As we read it today in the light of what happened later its tone seems brutal and bellicose and its phraseology harsh and hostile. Perhaps, however, Shimomura could not help it, the

6. See Chap. II,

general public being entirely ignorant of the impending reorientation of policy and the Army, what is more, opposing it. The fighting services, which controlled the Board of Information, would not have permitted the publication of any statement not phrased to be provocative. In fact, Shimomura says that he carefully went over with the service ministers the draft prepared by his subordinates.⁷ The essential portion was the last paragraph which emphasized the need to protect the "polity of the empire." The following is the English text as reported in the *Nippon Times*:

Yet we must recognize that the worst condition has now come. For defending the final line, for protecting the national polity and the honor of our race, the government is exerting the utmost efforts and at the same time expects that the people will also overcome the present difficulty to protect the polity of the empire.

Most singularly, however, in the name of the war minister an order of the day had been published in all vernacular papers simultaneously with the above statement. It exhorted the entire Army to brace for the final encounter with the enemy. It said:

I declare to all officers and men of the Army:

The Soviet Union, directing its armed might in the wrong direction, has invaded Japan. It is quite clear that it aims at invading Greater East Asia although it endeavors to justify its aims. Things having come to this pass, words do not avail any more. All that remains to be done is to carry through to its end the holy war for the protection of the Land of the Gods.

We are determined to fight resolutely although that may involve our nibbling grass, eating earth, and sleeping in the fields. It is our belief that there is little in death. This is the spirit of the great Nanko who wanted to be reborn seven times in order to serve the country, or the indomitable spirit of Tokimune who refused to entertain delusions and pressed on vigorously with the work of crushing the Mongolian horde.

All officers and men of the entire Army without exception should realize the spirit of Nanko and Tokimune and march forward to encounter the mortal enemy.⁸

7. Kainan Shimomura, *Shusenki* (How the War Was Terminated).

8. Nanko, or Kusunoki, died a hero's death in 1336 while defending the cause of the crown. He is generally regarded as the eternal symbol of loyalty to the throne.

Tokimune was the shogun or military overlord who repelled the Mongolian invasion in 1281. He is regarded as the personification of the warrior's virtue.

The source for this order of the day is unavailable. (Ed.)

Of this order of the day Shimomura says rather apologetically that he was greatly shocked when he heard of it and that he tried in vain to prevent its publication.

The situation was perilous, fraught with the utmost danger. The opponents of peace began to assert themselves in the open. Posters appeared in the streets. Some said "Down with Badoglio!" Some listed Suzuki, Yonai, and Togo as abominable traitors to the national cause. A bomb was thrown into the foreign minister's residence. While the cabinet was sitting a statement was circulated on the afternoon of August 13 to all the metropolitan newspaper offices. It was in the form of an announcement by GHQ, and stated in violent language that the Army had decided upon an all-front and all-out war. It was issued, we learned later, entirely without the knowledge of either the war minister or the chief of staff of the Army! By a miracle we discovered this circular in time to prevent its publication in the press.

3

Meanwhile the tone of the foreign press became restive and critical of our delay in making a reply. Some papers went even to the length of stating that since the Emperor was the ritualistic fount of military morale, our monarchical system was the source of the concept of world conquest. Others, such as the London *Times*, expressed crude suspicions that there lurked hidden dynamite in our reservations concerning the Emperor's prerogatives. We were aware that there was an idea current in the United States to the effect that the Emperor was integrated with the expansionist policy, and identifying the Tenno system with rampant imperialism. Men like Owen Lattimore were known to be advocating the internment in China of the Emperor and of all males eligible for the throne. Such statements in Allied countries unfortunately strengthened the hands of those in Japan who mistrusted the intentions of the Allied powers.

As time wore on, so it seemed to us, the chances of peace grew thinner. At no time in my life did I feel such apprehension. It hourly consumed my body and soul. Those who were skeptical of the Allies' attitude insisted that we should at least make inquiries regarding the two paragraphs in question. They requested

that a telegram be addressed to the United States to the effect that only the government, not the Emperor, should be made subject to the supreme commander (paragraph two), and that the question concerning the ultimate form of the Japanese government should be left to our people as an internal affair (paragraph five). When Togo asked me to draft such a telegram of inquiry I refused to do so, saying that an inquiry of this sort would only precipitate a break which would prove fatal. Matsumoto, the able vice minister, advised Togo to be steady, and deftly parried the thrusts of the military. Togo acquiesced in our view and at the cabinet meeting firmly refused to consider these untimely suggestions. The issue thus remained confusing and even stouthearted Kido began to despair.

When the situation appeared almost hopeless, I telephoned Shigemitsu at Nikko and Konoye at Odawara (some two hours' journey by train from Tokyo) asking them to come at once to Tokyo. Shigemitsu was the first to arrive, late in the evening of August 12, and early next morning he saw Kido and encouraged him, urging the unconditional acceptance of the Allies' reply. Konoye also hastened back to Tokyo and rendered useful assistance by supporting Kido and advising Suzuki to be steady. Suzuki was again dependable.

It now remained to put the seal of imperial sanction on our views, views which became prevalent in the council of state. The cabinet was scheduled to meet at 10 A.M., August 14. Anticipating difficulties, I had obtained Kido's consent to transform the meeting into an imperial conference. Kido on his part had come to the conclusion that there was no alternative left but to petition the Emperor to convoke a joint imperial conference of the cabinet ministers and the members of the Supreme War Council. In fact, he had obtained imperial permission for convoking such a conference, at 8:40 A.M., when he had had a joint audience, with Prime Minister Suzuki. This meant that instead of forcing a decision the cabinet, in case of disagreement, could adjourn without one. The decision could be reached in the presence of the Emperor upon whose command we secretly relied. However, when I told Sakomizu, chief secretary of the cabinet, of this arrangement, he was rather skeptical, fearing that Anami might resign and that the Army might refuse to replace him with another war minister.

The situation, indeed, had become aggravated to that extent.

While during bombing B-29's were dropping thousands of leaflets containing the Japanese text of the Allies' reply, the Emperor summoned the full cabinet to his presence. This was entirely unexpected by the cabinet ministers, who hurried to the palace without even changing from their street clothes into the morning coats which were regulation attire in the court. The Emperor also sent for the two chiefs of staff and, once again, for Baron Hiranuma.

The imperial conference lasted from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00. Suzuki explained developments and recapitulated the argument of the foreign minister in favor of an immediate acceptance of the Allies' reply. Thereupon the brave trio, Anami, Toyoda, and Umezu, pleaded at length that they thought the Allies' reply was insufficient to ensure the national structure and believed it advisable to make inquiries once more to clarify what they regarded as dubious points. If that were impossible, the three warriors maintained, they would prefer to appeal to the arbitrament of the sword, for if we fought on there were yet chances to win. At least it was possible to conclude the war on better terms. This was the best argument they could produce from their stock. Even while they argued that they could still fight, they were still far from feeling sure of themselves.

It is true that they still commanded considerable military resources, with an Army of two million men (in Japan proper) and a conglomerate Air Force of some eight thousand planes. But even so it was quite clear that we did not have so much as a sporting chance. We could not hope to profit even by the fickle fortunes of war. It was no longer a war but a butchery, and a ruthless one at that. To win out under such circumstances was in our case entirely out of the question. Theirs, indeed, was the maximum of conviction without the minimum of reason. Goaded into despair, these war leaders wanted to invoke the vindictive gods—to what end?

When the arguments opposing the acceptance of the Allies' reply had been presented, the Emperor spoke to the following effect:

I have listened carefully to the arguments opposing the acceptance of the Allies' reply as it is. Let me now express my opinion. When I commanded the acceptance of the Potsdam proclamation, I did so after

a mature consideration of the situation prevailing at home and abroad. I do not think I have to change my mind now. I think it is impossible to continue the war any longer. I hear there are some who entertain doubts regarding the preservation of our national structure, but after all this is a question that largely depends on the will of our nation at large. On the whole I am inclined to regard the Allies' reply as sympathetic to our views. Although it is understandable that some should feel apprehensive about possible designs on the Allies' part, I would rather not think that way. I concur in the views of the foreign minister and think the reply is acceptable. You will all please agree to my views. If we do not terminate the war at this juncture, our unique national structure will be destroyed and our nation will suffer extermination. If we save anything, be it ever so little, we could yet hope to rebuild the nation in the future. I urge upon you, therefore, to accept the reply at once and save the nation, alleviating their untold sufferings. This will also conduce to the benefit of the world at large. I enjoin you to join forces with me and to carry out my command faithfully, preparing at once an imperial edict to that effect. I hear unfortunate reports that some elements in the fighting services are restive but the ministers of the services must do their best to enlighten them.

The Emperor also said that he understood well the feeling of the officers and men of the armed services who must be subjected to disarming and occupation by the erstwhile enemy, but he wanted above all to save the nation from the impending catastrophe. His heart was filled with the utmost sorrow and sympathy, he said, when he thought of those who had fallen on the battlefield or who had been killed or wounded by the war. He felt deeply concerned over the hardships of their bereaved families. He concluded his remarks by saying that he was ready to do anything to ensure the speedy termination of hostilities.

Thus ended the historic imperial conference. The Emperor was in tears when he pronounced his verdict; and overcome by emotion, all the twenty-four participants sobbed loudly. The nation was saved at last!

To bear the golden yoke of sovereignty is often in itself a tragedy. When a decision of such magnitude, involving the fate of millions, has to be made by a monarch, the rim of the imperial crown becomes red-hot steel and sears the wearer to the brain. The Emperor was brought up in a unique tradition peculiar to our

imperial court. He was nurtured in the idea that Japan was a holy land, protected since prehistoric times by her numberless guardian gods so that she had never suffered defeat. Mythology or faked history one might call it, but such was the foundation of his kingly education. It must have required immense courage on his part to break away from it all—which meant breaking away from his own self—in order to accept defeat. He commanded the cease fire to save the harassed nation. But the surrender brought about the sudden collapse of the empire, nullifying at one stroke the proud record of superb achievement during those eventful eighty years when Japan quickly rose to power by her own untiring efforts. A great empire vanishes like a dream, and the sufferings of the war years are now a story told by an idiot, leaving only the barren hopes of broken hearts.

A classical teaching says that protracted war brings about untoward events and that the deteriorating situation breeds popular discontents. Intoxicated with easy victories, this heroic nation once marched proudly to the battlefield with banners flying and drums beating. Soon successive defeats disillusioned her. Yet the Army, frantic and frenzied, still tried to bully the population, poor helpless people, driven to the slaughterhouse, into a war of desperation. The situation was really an explosive one. Then came the imperial command to lay down our arms.

The Emperor expressed the desire personally to address the nation at large. So a phonograph record was made in the palace at about midnight on August 14. He also offered to give personal orders to the Army and Navy, but this was considered unnecessary. But later on three members of the imperial family were dispatched to various fronts. Prince Kanin went to the south, Prince Asaka to China, and Prince Takeda to Manchuria to make the expeditionary forces submit to the Emperor's command without disobedience.

The cabinet met at 1 P.M. on August 14 and after a lengthy discussion approved the imperial edict which was ready by 8:30 P.M. for the imperial signature. The draft had been prepared by Masaatsu Yasuoka, Mizuho Takeda, Michio Kihara, and others. At noon on August 15 the astounded nation listened in to the radio, as required, and heard for the first time the recorded voice of the Emperor. It came as a complete surprise to them, this historic

announcement of surrender. Most of them anticipated a declaration of war upon the Soviet Union. Very many people sobbed aloud and wept bitterly. The Emperor's tremulous voice came over the air:

To our good and loyal subjects:

After pondering deeply the general trends of the world and the actual conditions obtaining in our empire today, we have decided to effect a settlement of the present situation by resorting to an extraordinary measure.

We have ordered our Government to communicate to the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, China and the Soviet Union that our empire accepts the provisions of their joint declaration.

To strive for the common prosperity and happiness of all nations as well as the security and well-being of our subjects is the solemn obligation which has been handed down by Our Imperial Ancestors and we lay it close to the heart.

Indeed, we declared war on America and Britain out of our sincere desire to ensure Japan's self-preservation and the stabilization of East Asia, it being far from our thought either to infringe upon the sovereignty of other nations or to embark upon territorial aggrandizement.

But now the war has lasted for nearly four years. Despite the best that has been done by everyone—the gallant fighting of the military and naval forces, the diligence and assiduity of our servants of the State and the devoted service of our one hundred million people—the war situation has developed not necessarily to Japan's advantage, while the general trends of the world have all turned against her interest.

Moreover, the enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is, indeed, incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives. Should we continue to fight, it would not only result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but also it would lead to the total extinction of human civilization.

Such being the case, how are we to save the millions of our subjects, or to atone ourselves before the hallowed spirits of our imperial ancestors? This is the reason why we have ordered the acceptance of the provisions of the joint declaration of the powers.

We cannot but express the deepest sense of regret to our allied nations of East Asia, who have consistently cooperated with the Empire towards the emancipation of East Asia.

The thought of those officers and men as well as others who have fallen in the fields of battle, those who died at their posts of duty, and

those who met with death and all their bereaved families, pains our heart night and day.

The welfare of the wounded and the war sufferers, and of those who have lost their home and livelihood is the object of our profound solicitude. The hardships and sufferings to which our nation is to be subjected hereafter will be certainly great.

We are keenly aware of the inmost feelings of all you, our subjects. However, it is according to the dictates of the time and fate that we have resolved to pave the way for a grand peace for all the generations to come by enduring the unendurable and suffering what is unsufferable. Having been able to save and maintain the structure of the Imperial State, we are always with you, our good and loyal subjects, relying upon your sincerity and integrity.

Beware most strictly of any outbursts of emotion that may engender needless complications, and of any fraternal contention and strife that may create confusion, lead you astray and cause you to lose the confidence of the world.

Let the entire nation continue as one family from generation to generation, ever firm in its faith in the imperishableness of its divine land, and mindful of its heavy burden of responsibilities, and the long road before it. Unite your total strength to be devoted to the construction for the future. Cultivate the ways of rectitude, nobility of spirit, and work with resolution so that you may enhance the innate glory of the Imperial State and keep pace with the progress of the world.⁹

It may be of some interest to the reader that the phrase "the war situation has developed not necessarily to Japan's advantage" was adopted because of the insistence of the war minister. He opposed the original draft which had read "the war situation went daily from bad to worse." In fact the cabinet spent much time in arguing this point. So extreme was the susceptibility of our "unvanquishable" Army, in defeat.

Kido wrote as follows in his diary, shortly before the commencement of the Pacific war:

At the audience today the Emperor said it was most regrettable that our people did not seem to appreciate his earnest solicitude for peace. The imperial rescript issued on the occasion of our withdrawal from the League of Nations and at the time of the conclusion of the Tripartite Pact included references to world peace, but the people were apt to disregard them although these expressed his primary concern.

9. *New York Times* (August 15, 1945), p. 3. (Ed.)

Should it unfortunately come to the worst, you should not forget to state clearly in the rescript my desire for peace.

The Emperor's broadcast of August 15 which served as the imperial rescript on terminating the war in fact embodied his remarks at the second imperial conference.

In November, 1942, when the war was still at its height, the late Hugh Byas, who had spent twenty-three years in Tokyo as the correspondent of the London *Times*, wrote in his illuminating book, *Government by Assassination*, the following lines which testify to his deep understanding of, and penetrating insight into, our political psychology:

The Emperor is the only personage in the country whose prestige is untouched by the war, the only leader whose moral authority is so great that all the people will obey him. The immutable throne is a fixed point around which the state can rally its forces while inevitable changes are being made. If the Emperor's advisers find that no ordinary change will stave off a convulsion, they can decide that the Emperor himself must intervene.¹⁰

Not only did Byas foresee our ultimate defeat but he also predicted the manner in which the war was brought to an end.

In the evening Prime Minister Suzuki went on the air and said, his voice shaken by emotion: "As a member of the fighting forces I know very well what our officers and men feel. But the duty of us humble subjects in any case, either by life or death, is to assist in fostering the eternal prosperity and glory of the imperial house. This loyal spirit alone can safeguard the political structure of the empire." Readers are aware of Suzuki's unlimited loyalty to the throne, which included much that was personal on account of his former close association with the Emperor as grand chamberlain. It is debatable if, under ordinary circumstances, the nation would have shared his enthusiasm about the imperial house, but as the people were truly thankful for the termination of hostilities they were profoundly moved by the Emperor's command to cease fire, and responded to the ardent plea of the old prime minister.

On the following day the Foreign Office dispatched a telegram to notify the Allied powers as follows:

1. His Majesty the Emperor has issued an Imperial rescript regarding Japan's acceptance to the provisions of the Potsdam declaration.

2. His Majesty the Emperor is prepared to authorize and ensure the signature by his Government and the Imperial General Headquarters of the necessary terms for carrying out the provisions of the Potsdam declaration. His Majesty is also prepared to issue his commands to all the military, naval, and air authorities of Japan and all the forces under their control wherever located to cease active operations, to surrender arms and to issue such other orders as may be required by the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces for the execution of the above-mentioned terms.¹¹

This was the last act of our diplomacy.

4

Prior to this, at about 11:30 P.M. on this memorable day, a contingent of the imperial garrison marched out in an attempt to raise an insurrection. This was engineered by a group of young officers in the war office, whose ringleader was a Lieutenant Colonel Hatanaka. Led by Hatanaka, three officers, including Major Koga who was Tojo's nephew, called upon General Mori, commander of the Imperial Guard Division. They peremptorily demanded that the division commander cooperate with them to take vigorous steps in order to nullify the Emperor's decision for peace, which they said had been forced upon him by his unpatriotic advisers. General Mori refused and was shot dead instantly. His nephew, Lieutenant Colonel Shiraishi, who tried to shield the general, was cut down by saber. The officers then forged an order for the Imperial Guard Division to occupy all the palace gates and disarm the palace police, cutting off all communication with the outside. These officers wanted in the first place to seize the phonograph record of the Emperor's broadcast in order to prevent the impending announcement of capitulation.

For the sake of security the recording was left overnight in the palace. Shimomura, state minister and concurrently president of the Board of Information, and three executives of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation who were returning to their respective offices

11. *U. S. Department of State Bulletin*, XIII, 255. (Ed.)

after testing the record were suddenly taken prisoners, together with other officials, as they came out of the palace gate. Eighteen in all, they were confined for hours in a small room guarded by soldiers with fixed bayonets. Some of them were strictly questioned as to the whereabouts of the recording but all replied that they did not know. The rebels ransacked every corner of the palace and vainly cross-examined every official at bayonet's point.

On receiving word of this uprising General Tanaka, commander in chief of the Eastern Army group, hastened to the barracks of the First Regiment of the Guard Division. The whole regiment was about to march into the palace with loaded guns and fixed bayonets. General Tanaka summoned the regimental commander, Colonel Watanabe, to his presence and told him that the order he had received was forged. Dismayed, Colonel Watanabe disbanded the troops. Tanaka then drove to the palace where another regiment was being mobilized for the uprising. He harangued the troops for three hours, pointing out the folly of their misguided conduct. The soldiers were finally won over to reason and the four officers who plotted the insurrection killed themselves on the spot in atonement for their irregular behavior. Others were handed over to the gendarmes. The imprisoned palace officials, including the grand chamberlain and Shimomuras' party, were released. Thus the uprising collapsed before it assumed the character of a general insurrection. It was by a miracle that General Tanaka succeeded in holding the reins of these fiery steeds. Due credit must be given him. If it had not been for him, the prospects of a peaceful termination of hostilities would have been ruined. Deeply grateful for his efforts, the Emperor thanked the general warmly when he received him in audience later in the day.

Marquis Kido happened to be in the palace at the time of the uprising. Fortunately he received warning in time. Quickly dressing himself, he secured certain confidential documents which he tore into pieces and threw into a flush toilet. He then escaped to the underground vault room where the imperial safe is located, and met there another intended victim, Ishiwata, minister of the imperial household. These two narrowly escaped death, hiding all night by the safe in which was deposited the Emperor's phonograph recording for which the rebels were searching. There was an air-raid alert in progress that night and the blackout necessitated

conducting the search by flashlight. This explains the failure of the rebels to locate the safe.

Meanwhile other detachments besieged the prime minister's official residence with machine-gun fire and set fire to the private residences of Admiral Suzuki and Baron Hiranuma. Both of these men however were safe, having been warned beforehand. Suzuki escaped by a hair's breadth and this was made possible only because direct telephone connection between his office and home had been installed but two days previously. Some few raided Kido's home.

Other troops also occupied various broadcasting stations, including JOAK, Tokyo Radio, in order to suppress the Emperor's broadcast. Having failed to seize the recording of the Emperor's address, they now wanted to suppress the broadcast and to make their own appeal over the air, exhorting the nation to continue the war. However, as an air raid was then in progress, they had to obtain special permission for a broadcast from GHQ. This they were refused. Finally these troops too were prevailed upon to surrender to the authorities.

While these disturbances were threatening the peaceful transition from war to peace, Anami ended a warrior's life by committing harakiri. It was as if his afflictions had conquered him. He had demanded the prosecution of the war, knowing well all the time that to do so was neither possible nor profitable. Publicly he stood firmly for war, personally he was inclined to be skeptical. As early as the beginning of 1945 Anami even sent word from the Philippines to Shigemitsu, then foreign minister, that it was advisable to seek a diplomatic settlement of the war. But he was, after all, war minister, and as such expressed the Army's refusal to surrender. In the end he was obliged to instruct the Army to capitulate. He was obviously in a dilemma from which it was humanly impossible to extricate himself.

To Colonel Matsutani, who at midnight interviews urged him frequently to expedite the termination of hostilities, he said it was most desirable to avoid going on our knees as the frightened officials of the Shogunate had done before Commodore Perry in 1853. Matsutani advised the war minister to inspect the conditions of defense and accompanied him to Kyushu in May and to Hok-

kaido in June. On these journeys Matsutani sufficiently impressed Anami with the futility of prolonging the war.

The abortive army insurrection was a severe blow to Anami, for as war minister he was technically responsible for the maintenance of discipline. Also he may have entertained honest fears of the danger to the national structure in accepting the Allies' reply without modification.

It may be mentioned here in passing that on August 10 Anami secretly sent for Matsuoka, who was nursing his protracted illness at Izu, and asked him if it was at all possible still to retrieve the situation by diplomacy. Matsuoka stayed two days in Tokyo and exchanged views with his friends, Kido among them, in order to ascertain the true situation, about which he then knew little. When he reported to Anami that nothing would now avail, the war minister became despondent. His military aide is of the opinion that Anami at that time decided on suicide. This episode is interesting as it shows that our military leaders regarded diplomacy as a craftly art, capable of producing a miracle even at that critical point.

It may be added here that General Tanaka also killed himself, on August 24, the eve of the entry into Tokyo of the first American contingents. He wanted to make amends for the armed disturbances in the palace which had been perpetrated by troops under his command. His death took place in the office building which now houses the Allied GHQ.

General Sugiyama also took his life later, together with his wife, in a double suicide. This was certainly more warrior-like than Tojo's bungling attempt.

During the first few weeks following the surrender the planes of our Navy Special Attack Corps several times flew over Tokyo and dropped leaflets which read, "Don't surrender. Don't believe the imperial rescript. It is a false document." Posters appeared and handbills were circulated in busy streets which denounced the jushin for misguiding the Emperor and delivering the nation to the Allies. Lacking in organization, however, such resistance to peace collapsed in a few days' time.

In order to replace the disaffected palace guard, some troops were brought to Tokyo from nearby districts. A platoon of troops,

some four hundred in number, from Ibaraki prefecture revolted and seized Ueno Hill in the center of the city. Another contingent took possession of Atago Hill, also in the capital. They challenged the authenticity of the surrender rescript. Lacking leadership, they too, were in time induced to disperse. Those who occupied Atago Hill killed themselves with hand grenades, and the young officers who had led the Ueno group also committed suicide.

For a while our people were in a state of moral shock. Overnight everything had changed, upsetting the old familiar standards by which social values and virtues had been measured. There was no more war. Peace had come at last. Peace, the heart's desire of all the people, men and women, young and old, peace with all its bliss and blessing; but what a peace! This was the end of a long, long journey, four years from the start of the Pacific war in 1941, and fourteen years from the Manchurian intervention of 1931.

As the people slowly recovered from the initial amazement and awakened from their mental stupor, the misery of defeat began to dawn upon their dazed minds. Chaos, confusion, consternation followed. Our country was to be occupied. The Yanks were coming. Their atrocities, people were told, knew no bounds. Seized by a wave of terror, men fled from the cities into the country in order to hide their wives, daughters, and family possessions. A group of fanatics committed mass suicide in the palace plaza in protest against the surrender.

5

The death of Anami deprived the Suzuki cabinet of a war minister at the very critical moment when our surrender had to be carried out. The rank and file of the Army and Navy were still restive, smarting under the sudden blow of capitulation which, entirely ignorant as they were of the true facts of our plight, they regarded as wholly unjustified. Some of the hotheaded younger officers were planning an organized resistance to the Allied forces, in open defiance of the Imperial decision. It was therefore deemed advisable that Prince Higashikuni, the Emperor's uncle-in-law and a general on the active list, should be entrusted with the preservation of discipline and the faithful carrying out of the terms of surrender. Not calling a jushin conference, Kido this time

merely consulted Hiranuma and recommended the prince to the throne. On August 15 the Emperor sent for Prince Higashikuni, who took office as prime minister two days later. Konoye became vice premier in the new cabinet. The new prime minister was specifically commanded by the Emperor to "respect the Constitution fully and strive hard to cope with the situation by enforcing discipline in the Army and maintaining law and order throughout the country."

This command was incorporated in the radio address which the prince broadcast to the nation on assuming office. On the same day the Emperor issued an imperial message to the officers and men of the fighting services instructing them to behave with rectitude, suffering the insufferable and bearing the unbearable in order to lay an enduring foundation for the welfare of the country.

On August 20 another short broadcast was repeated by the prime minister at intervals of one hour from 6 P.M. to midnight. "So far as the preservation of our national structure is concerned," he said, "I have a positive and definite plan, so you must all behave with the utmost calm, maintaining a dispassionate attitude." This message was highly mystifying and aroused wide curiosity among the uninitiated audience.

The truth was that the police had discovered that the younger officers in and around Tokyo were contemplating the occupation of the imperial palace in an armed uprising with a view to impeding the measures about to be taken by the government in compliance with Allied orders to effectuate the surrender. The coup was scheduled to take place at midnight on this day. Hence the puzzling broadcast. These officers, the report said, were provoked to such action by their allegedly grave concern regarding the preservation of the national structure, which in their opinion was jeopardized by the acceptance of the Potsdam proclamation. Throughout the day a large fleet of military lorries and trucks was seen speeding out of the metropolitan area, apparently to collect and convoy the would-be insurgents. At the appointed hour, however, only a small number assembled at the palace plaza. Seeing that their plans had miscarried, they soon dispersed without resorting to violence.

In fact, throughout these crucial days a constant vigil was required over the elements of the Army and Air Force which were

openly defying the imperial command to lay down their arms. General Kawabe's party flew on August 19 to Manila to receive instructions regarding the impending entry of American forces into our mainland. When this group failed to return at the appointed time on account of a forced landing, we feared that the plane had been shot down by one of our own fighters piloted by a dissident officer. We were therefore immensely relieved when General Kawabe returned safely to Tokyo on August 21. From him we learned that the first American contingent would land at Atsugi airfield on August 26. It was necessary to disarm our planes and make them unfit for flying by that time. However, the local navy air force, the Sagamihara Air Corps, did not obey instructions but continued to fly, declaring their intention to engage the American forces in battle. There were also the two thousand members of the Special Attack Corps, the most fanatical of all our military organizations. They even boasted they would attack the battleship *Missouri* anchored in Tokyo Bay. Only by the earnest persuasion of Prince Takamatsu, who was dispatched there by the Emperor's wish, did the officers abandon their belligerent intention. The airfield was made available for the occupying forces in the evening of August 24. Early next morning the United States planes began to swarm in the sky. Mishaps were thus fortunately averted by a hair's breath, a matter of a bare twelve hours.

Such incidents were by no means isolated. They were almost a common occurrence all over the country. The young officers got control of many airfields and dropped aerial missiles urging the people at large to carry on the fight. Some even announced the establishment of a "government of resistance," adding to the confusion of the jittery nation. On August 25 an imperial message was again issued requesting the demobilized troops to maintain calm and exert themselves for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the nation.

These facts testify, I think, to the magnitude of the dangers and difficulties we then faced. As I now look back, it was a miracle that the surrender was brought about without serious mishap. It clearly shows, I believe, that the time was ripe to initiate such a bold reorientation of policy. If we had attempted it sooner I am certain it would have ended in a fiasco. Neither could we defer it, for that would surely have entailed the annihilation of our people.

We acted at the right moment. Although we few staked our lives upon this high adventure, we would not have secured the desired result if it had not been for the firm guidance of the Emperor. It is said that General MacArthur told the Emperor at their first meeting that no monarch had ever displayed such unique leadership. It was indeed he who led the nation out of the shadow of night into the light of day.

On September 4, two days after the ceremony on the *Missouri*, the Diet was convened. Nothing, I think, is a more fitting close to this book than the message read by the Emperor on this occasion: We issued some days ago a proclamation of the cessation of hostilities, and we dispatched our plenipotentiaries and caused them to sign the documents relating thereto.

It is our desire that our people will surmount the manifold hardships and trials attending the termination of the war and make manifest the innate glory of Japan's national polity, win the confidence of the world, establish firmly a peaceful state and contribute to the progress of mankind, and our thoughts are constantly directed to that end.

In the consummation of the great task, yet would we remain cool, calm, maintaining self-composure, exercise patience and circumspection; externally, observe faithfully the commitments of the empire and foster concord and amity with all nations; and internally, devote our efforts to reconstruction in every field—the entire nation toiling ceaselessly with one mind and thereby strengthening the foundation of the state.

Nothing shall be left undone in extending aid and support to the families of deceased soldiers, protecting the sick and wounded and promoting the welfare of newly demobilized officers and men and affording succor and relief to all those who have been made victims of the calamities of the war.

We have commanded our Ministers of State to explain the foreign and domestic conditions and the course of events that led to the extraordinary measure. In conformance with our wishes and in accordance with imperial policy to build up the state upon ethical principles, we shall make endeavors in concert with the Government to assist our task and with the millions of our subjects shall unite in service to the state with greater zeal than ever.¹²

12. *New York Times* (September 5, 1945), p. 3. (Ed.)

Postscript

FEW IF ANY Japanese knew that during the war their Navy possessed the largest aircraft carrier in the world. This was the *Shinano*, a monster warship displacing 72,000 tons with full load. She was the mightiest carrier that ever sailed the sea. She bristled with the finest weapons and was fitted with the most up-to-date equipment. In short, she was the last word in scientific wonders. It took more than ten years to build her and thousands of millions of yen were lavished upon her. Yet this ship, built to be "unsinkable," had a naval career of only seventeen hours! Hers was the shortest life yet recorded in the history of the naval craft of the world.

The *Shinano* was completed on November 11, 1944. Our military situation was then desperate and the giant ship carried our last hopes. She left the naval base at Yokosuka at 6 P.M. on November 28 on her maiden voyage to Osaka en route to the battle area. She was escorted by three destroyers. A half moon was shimmering on the waves. At a point some hundred miles off the coast of Wakayama she was attacked by a submarine. At 3:13 A.M. four torpedoes hit her amidship in the most vulnerable spot, just above the bulge on the starboard side. For seven hours she sailed on hoping to limp into port. Unfortunately the sea was very rough. At exactly 10:56 A.M. the carrier capsized and sank, taking with her more than one-third of her crew of 1,500.

The *Shinano*, 264 m. in length and 50 m. in width, could carry 87 planes of all kinds, including bombers, fighters, and scouting planes. Her flight deck was lined with special steel plate 30 cm. thick, further reinforced beneath by a heavy layer of concrete. Her main armament consisted of 8 twin-mount 12.7-cm. AA guns, 140 25-mm. machine guns, and 12 rocket guns. Originally conceived and constructed as a sister ship to the two superdreadnaughts *Yamato* and *Musashi*, each of 64,000 tons, she was later transformed into a carrier. She was consequently protected by

unusually thick armor. Until the disaster actually happened, nobody ever dreamed she could be sunk.¹

The disaster of the *Shinano* is, I think, peculiarly symbolic of our war efforts. We built a fine ship and took much pride in her. She looked like a majestic and unperishable castle of the seas. But she was sunk before she fired a shot. There is more than a touch of irony in the fate of the *Shinano*.

For a poor country like Japan the construction of costly warships meant a crushing burden upon the national treasury. And yet we built a good number of them. We also maintained a vast Army and an ever expanding Air Force. In the end we became like the mammoth whose tusks, growing ever bigger, finally unbalanced its bodily structure. As everything went to support the huge tusks, very little was left to sustain the rest of the body. The mammoth finally became extinct.

Why did the mammoth arm itself with weapons such as ultimately to bring about its own destruction? Because it was apprehensive. Why was it apprehensive? Because it had enemies. Enemies, indeed! In its desire to defend itself against external enemies the poor creature forgot the very fact that its tusks were its own mortal enemy!

Why did Japan arm herself to the teeth? Because she was apprehensive. Why was she apprehensive? Because she had enemies. Why were there enemies? Because her aggressive policy excited suspicion in others. Rather than abandon that objectionable policy she augmented her armaments. But armaments are a relative affair. There is no end to an armament race. Japan could not continue the race indefinitely against the combination of such powerful nations as the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, not to speak of China, her actual or potential enemies. As a result, her military strategists deemed it necessary to force the issue by resorting to war before it should become too late. It was soon after our withdrawal from the London Naval Disarmament Conference of 1936 that the Navy began to construct the three superdreadnaughts of which the *Shinano* was one.

The ten years during which the *Shinano* was constructed were

1. The chief cause of the disaster was the lack of trained personnel on the ship: 60 per cent of the crew had never been aboard a warship while 20 per cent were raw recruits. Besides, there were many civilians and workers who were traveling to Osaka on the vessel.

marked by rapid deterioration of our relations with the democratic powers. The *Shinano* was indeed a child of misfortune and her fate symbolic of the tragic decade just now closed with our capitulation.

In the Pacific war we suffered 5,000,000 casualties.² We lost 549 warships, approximately 2,500 merchant ships of over 500 gross tons each, and about 50,000 airplanes. That indicates the magnitude of our war effort. If the energy consumed in turning out these engines of destruction had been employed in peaceful production, it would have enriched the nation enormously!

At last our nation has awakened to the folly of waging war. Never again will it construct a *Shinano*. As a proof we may cite the Constitution promulgated in May, 1947, under which Japan forever renounces war.³

It is indeed with dismay that we ponder the frightful waste of the wars in which mankind has chronically indulged. Much like children upon the beach who, at their idle whim, build and break sand castles, men have labored arduously to erect cities and civilizations only to shatter them in their recurrent and devastating wars. As the eternal surge of time and tide rolls on, kingdoms and empires have emerged and have vanished without trace. When we come to think of it, both the grandeur of Rome and the beauty of Greece are, after all, but foam floating on the wave of ages.

In a war of attrition there is little difference between the victor and the vanquished, as all the moral and material resources of combatant nations are ruthlessly mobilized for the sake of war. The sacrifice is bound to be so enormous that it takes years of tireless toil even to attempt to recover the squandered strength. The return to normal conditions is beset with difficulties enough to tax the utmost ingenuity of statesmanship. The present situation in Europe and Asia is eloquent proof of that. Famine and fear stalk abroad, hope and faith are withering as pain and plague grip

2. Total dead and injured are set at 9,840,000. *New York Times* (April 20, 1949), p. 5. (Ed.)

3. Article 9 reads, "Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation, and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

"In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized."

the teeming millions. And the one world of peace is still not in sight.

It seems to me that since peace is indivisible we should now abandon the habit of dividing the world arbitrarily into the contending camps of "we" and "they." The tendency to overemphasize the division of the world into rival spheres should not be encouraged. Neither should the counterarray of the Occident against the Orient be countenanced nor the alignment of the victorious powers against the defeated nations.

When the Congress of Vienna assembled, the Big Four—England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia—invited defeated France to hear their pleasure. Metternich handed Talleyrand a protocol which embodied the results of previous discussions of the four powers. Several of the paragraphs contained the words "the Allies." Talleyrand at once pounced on this expression. Why Allies, since there was no more war? "Let us speak frankly, gentlemen," he said; "if there are to be Allies in this business then this is no place for me."⁴ In the eyes of God, there is neither "we" nor "they." Peace exists when nations live in concord and conciliation; war is inevitable when nations, divided, vie in conflict and controversy. There should be only one alliance, an alliance of all nations for peace. No longer should the passions and rancors aroused by war remain a scar on the fair face of peace. We had better strive to remedy and remove the mortifying causes that are likely to lead to disturbance. Otherwise, the world, I fear, will remain as ever a garden of sorrow, with the seed of peace falling upon barren ground.

It is nowadays fashionable in Japan to indulge in indiscriminate condemnation of the ways of the past. I, for one, seriously doubt the wisdom of that. Aggression, for example, is one thing, but patriotism is another. A healthy patriotism, I submit, constitutes one of the mainstays of a sound world order. A man who is not capable of dying for his own country is perhaps not qualified to be a good citizen of the world. We have, as a nation, had legitimate grievances. Even with honest sweat on our brow we could not maintain a decent standard of living, confined as we were to our narrow and overcrowded archipelago. Any patriotic man would

4. Harold Nicholson, *The Congress of Vienna* (Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1946), p. 141.

have endeavored to alleviate the situation. Our military ruined our country simply because they resorted to violence instead of seeking a remedy through peaceful means. The world as a whole would be better off if all the nations realized the futility of resorting to war.

In his last speech, the Jefferson day address prepared the day before he died, the late President Roosevelt wrote: "The work, my friends, is peace, more than an end of this war—an end to the beginnings of all wars, yes, an end, forever, to this impractical, unrealistic settlement of the differences between governments by the mass killings of people."⁵

That address was scheduled to be broadcast on the day following his death. Though undelivered, therefore, these were the last words—the very last breath—of F.D.R. As such, every word of it should remain engraved in the heart of every nation.

One last word about the Emperor who plays a decisive role in this narrative. There was once a time when in other countries suspicion was rife that the so-called emperor cult constituted a source of Japan's aggression. That was most unfortunate, as nothing was further removed from the Emperor's thought than aggression. Many distinguished foreigners, diplomats, statesmen, businessmen, and journalists who have had access to the throne readily testify to the peaceful character of the Emperor, who has always been solicitous of the peace and welfare of mankind in general. He is more of a scholar than a statesman. That his hobby is biological research is well known but few people have seen the portrait of Abraham Lincoln hanging on a wall of his private study.

Born in April, 1901, Hirohito is forty-nine years old this year. For many years Admiral Togo, famed for heroism in the battle of the Japan Sea, served as his tutor. In the autumn of 1921, as a young Crown Prince, the Emperor-to-be visited Europe. He returned home deeply impressed by democratic ideas and institutions in that heyday of democracy in the world. At the age of twenty-five, in December, 1926, he ascended the throne on the death of his father. The years of his reign have been full of vicissitudes, witnessing the meteoric rise and the equally swift fall of his empire. He has lived a more or less sequestered life in the palace, "beyond the clouds" as the Japanese used to say. On

5. *New York Times* (April 14, 1945), p. 6. (Ed.)

January 1, 1946, he caused an edict to be issued in which, of his own volition, he denied his alleged divinity. He declared that he was with, and of, the nation.

For you have but mistook me all this while:
I live with bread like you, feel want,
Taste grief, need friends: subjected thus,
How can you say to me I am a king? ⁶

Replace the word "king" with "God" and these lines of Shakespeare I suppose describe most fittingly the Emperor's feeling.

Some readers will ask why, if the Emperor could command the cease fire, he did not forbid the resort to war in the first place? The answer is that while at the time of the termination of the war there was a division of opinion in the councils of state, at the commencement of the war there was unanimity of views in the government and the Supreme Command. It was the established constitutional practice, upon such a unanimous recommendation, for the Emperor to act accordingly and without questioning. Therefore, although he could exercise his authority in ending the war, there was no basis for doing so regarding the decision to start it. Hugh Byas writes:

Throughout the present reign those statesmen [close to the throne] have been, and in a lesser degree still are, men of wide experience and moderate views. If it is asked why they did not prevent the present war, the answer is that their first duty is to preserve the security of the throne and the unity of the nation. When the fighting services had made up their minds, when their preparations were complete, when every question had been asked and every objection exhausted, the Emperor had to agree with those all-powerful subjects and he would be so advised. It would be dramatizing things too much to say that a situation ever existed in which the Emperor's yes or no would have meant the difference between peace and war. When that stage was reached the answer was inevitable.⁷

Under the new Constitution of 1947 the Emperor has been reduced to "the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power." (Article 1). Never again will he be faced with the choice between war and peace. Constitutionally he possesses

6. Richard II, III. 2. 174. (Ed.)

7. *Government by Assassination*, p. 302.

no power in that respect. Furthermore, the Constitution itself forever outlaws war for Japan. It is now the Emperor's mission to be a living symbol of peace, peace that "hath her victories no less renown'd than war."

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